



20  
17

# PARKS AND RECREATION COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN

CHESTERFIELD COUNTY, VIRGINIA

DRAFT

page intentionally left blank

**Table of Contents**

**Section 1 - Plan Overview**

*Introduction.....2*  
*Plan Goals.....2*

**Section 2 - Department Overview**

*Department Profile.....3*  
*Parks and Facilities.....8*

**Section 3 - Planning Considerations**

*Reflection on 2002 Parks and Recreation Master Plan.....14*  
*County Resources.....17*  
*Recreation Trends.....20*  
*County Demographics.....24*  
*Public and Stakeholder Input.....29*  
*Facility Assessment.....33*  
*Operations Assessment.....57*

**Section 4 - Recommendations and Implementation**

*Priorities.....59*  
*Park Land.....61*  
*Facilities.....65*  
*Programs.....72*  
*Operations.....72*  
*Action Items.....74*

**Appendices A - C**

# SECTION I - PLAN OVERVIEW

---

## Introduction

**The Parks and Recreation Master Plan is a document intended to guide the efforts of the Parks and Recreation Department as it seeks to fulfill the current and future recreational needs of the community.** This document is a continuation of previous long-term planning efforts, which began in 1974 with the Open Space Plan, followed by the 2002 Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Completion of this plan was accomplished through the collection and analysis of data from multiple sources. These sources included survey results, input from county departments and other organizations, census data, and data on current park facilities, programs and operations.

**Development of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan is a directive outlined in the Public Facilities Plan section of the County Comprehensive Plan.** “Moving Forward... The Comprehensive Plan For Chesterfield County” was adopted in 2012 and outlines the broader needs for recreation in the county and provides general guidance for acquisition of new park land and development of facilities. The Parks and Recreation Master Plan expands upon this planning effort and provides more detailed recommendations for park land acquisition and facility development, as well as recommendations for recreational programming, renovations, and operational changes.

## Plan Goals

- ▶ Develop strategies for the provision of safe and accessible public facilities for users of all ages and abilities
- ▶ Expand upon standards and policies to ensure that current and future facilities are appropriately maintained
- ▶ Identify best practices for operational procedures and outreach in order to provide a consistently high level of service to the community
- ▶ Plan for appropriate facilities and programs to serve current and projected population levels
- ▶ Encourage involvement of the public and other stakeholders as new strategies are implemented and new facilities and programs are developed
- ▶ Encourage good stewardship of park lands
- ▶ Identify opportunities to protect unique and sensitive environmental lands while offering opportunities for public enjoyment and education
- ▶ Identify opportunities to protect lands of significant historical or cultural importance while offering opportunities for public enjoyment and education
- ▶ Promote the county as a destination for tourism, leveraging sports facilities, history, and other recreational assets
- ▶ Support the County Strategic Plan goals by providing quality facilities and programs

## SECTION II - DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

### Department Profile

The Parks and Recreation Department is organized into two major divisions with separate sections under each that manage various department operations and services.

#### Chesterfield Parks and Recreation Mission Statement

*The purpose of Parks and Recreation is to enhance the quality of life for citizens and visitors through first choice educational and recreational experiences in exceptional facilities.*

### RECREATION DIVISION

In addition to management of all recreation programming, the Division handles finance and automation, human resources, marketing, promotion and media relations, customer service, facility reservations and management of the Fairgrounds facilities. The Recreation Division offered 1,261 programs in FY17, serving over 289,000 citizens. Recreational programming and services are managed by three sections of the Recreation Division:

#### **Athletics/Sports Tourism**

The Athletics section manages athletic programs through over 70 co-sponsored associations and leagues. The section offers sports classes and camps and is responsible for facility supervision, athletic field and school site scheduling and sports tourism. There are some athletic sites that are operated via lease agreements. The athletic section also promotes sports tourism within the County, advertising the world-class facilities and fields and tournaments and events to the County.



#### **Outdoor Recreation**

The Outdoor Recreation section provides outdoor adventure, instruction, environmental education, camps, trips, and special events. In addition, the section manages the Rockwood Nature Center and the Chesterfield Challenge Course and provides programs in department-managed conservation areas. Chesterfield's outdoor programs are regionally recognized for their excellence and affordability.



## **Community Recreation**

The Community Recreation Section manages community, 50+, therapeutic recreation and history programs, trips and special events. In addition, several facilities are managed including the Chesterfield Fairgrounds, three community buildings (Ettrick, Bensley and Stonebridge), four historical buildings (Chesterfield Museum and Historical Jail, Trinity Church and Magnolia Grange), three satellite senior centers (Huguenot Baptist Church, Chesterfield Baptist Church and Episcopal Church of our Saviour). Programs include summer camps, classes, workshops, special events, tours and trips. Community Recreation works with several outside organizations including recreation co-sponsored groups AIM USA, Chesterfield Community Band, Chesterfield County Choral Society, The Ruff House Dog Park, Sophistocats Ballroom Dancing, X-Zone Skate Park, Special Olympics, The Miracle League of Richmond and Chesterfield Pickleball Club) as well as the Chesterfield Historical Society, Eppington Foundation, Falling Creek Foundation, Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation and Chester Community Association.

## **Finance**

The Finance Section is responsible for the department's financial management, including budgeting, purchasing, accounting, accounts payable, accounts receivable, fixed assets and multi-year financial planning. Finance staff develop, negotiate, and administer leases, contracts, easements, agreements, MOUs, and license agreements.

## **PARKS DIVISION**

The Parks Division is divided into two main functional areas, operations and planning and construction services:

### **Parks Operations**

Section consists of seven maintenance teams located at park sites throughout the county and a two-person trail crew housed at the Central Park Maintenance Facility. The maintenance teams provide full grounds/facility services for 77 parks and school athletic facilities, 13 libraries and additional county facilities, and grounds maintenance to 70 schools, through contract with School Board. In total, the Division maintains over 7,100 acres. The Division also provides system-wide support with assistance of the Sheriff's workforce labor and arborist services. Parks operations maintains an Environmental Management System(EMS) and is ISO 14001 certified. This division works closely with Planning and Construction Services and Athletic Scheduling. The operations division also maintains the historic sites and facilities within the system. The historic sites require specialized maintenance and upkeep.

### **Planning and Construction Services**

The responsibilities of this section include site acquisition, zoning, plans development, permitting, construction administration and associated analysis in support of park facility development. The section also handles major maintenance projects, reviews zoning cases and development plans to ensure zoning condition compliance, and prepares maps and graphics for departmental and public use. Planning functions for the section include development of master plans for individual sites, and long range planning to include the Departmental Master Plan and assistance in other planning efforts such as the County Comprehensive Plan and Special Area Plans.

## **PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY COMMISSION (PRAC)**

The Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission (PRAC) provides a link between the community and the Parks and Recreation department. The PRAC has two representatives from each magisterial district and one from the School Board. The County Board of Supervisors appoints members to the PRAC for four-year terms. The Commission meets monthly to hear concerns, discuss issues, and provide input to the department about the operation of parks and recreation services.

## **PARTNERSHIP WITH FOUNDATIONS**

The Department works with several foundations in the region to provide a greater spectrum of services. These partnerships are primarily based around historical sites and programs, and are a way for the County to support the historic resources of the area. Historic sites require additional and/or specialized attention compared to standard parks and recreational activities, and partnerships with foundations allow this to happen. The foundations include:

### **The Eppington Foundation**

Eppington Plantation is a historic Chesterfield County home built circa 1768 by Frances Eppes, VI, the brother-in-law of Thomas Jefferson. The Eppington Foundation was formed in 1991. Its mission is to preserve, restore, and reconstruct Eppington and to educate the public as to its historical, cultural, agricultural, and architectural significance. The Foundation also raises funds to pay for projects such as repairs, paint analysis, and rebuilding the school house and kitchen. The Eppington Foundation is a tax-exempt non-profit organization with 501(c)(3) status.



### **Falling Creek Ironworks Park Foundation**

Falling Creek Ironworks Park is a public park within the County Parks system. The Foundation's mission is to promote the study of the history and industrial heritage of the area, to work for the proper conservation and archaeological exploration of the site; and to teach the community about the site and its history. The Foundation hosts educational events, commissions archaeological research and conservation on the site, and coordinates with the Parks Department on the development of the site.



### **Chesterfield Historical Society**

The Chesterfield Historical Society of VA is a non-profit 501(c)(3) established in 1981. Throughout the years CHSV has been a vital entity in the preservation of Chesterfield's Historic Sites. It is operated by volunteers, including an all-volunteer Board of Directors and is funded by membership dues, donations and grants. The society operates the County Museum, the Historic 1849 Jail, Magnolia Grange House Museum, and a public research library. Their mission is to collect, preserve, interpret, and promote Chesterfield County's unique past for the education and enjoyment of present and future generations.



### **Henricus Foundation**

The mission of The Henricus Foundation is to provide educational, cultural, and recreational opportunities through preservation, reconstruction, and interpretation of early Virginia history beginning with 16th century Virginia Indians and the 1611 Citie of Henricus at Henricus Historical Park. The Henricus Foundation operates the Henricus Historical Park living history museum in partnership with the counties of Chesterfield and Henrico.



### **The Mid-Lothian Mines and Rail Roads Foundation**

The mission of the Mid-Lothian Mines and Rail Roads Foundation is to provide educational, cultural and recreational opportunities through the preservation, reconstruction and interpretation of the historic coal mining and railroad sites in and around the Village of Midlothian. Initially, the focus will be on the existing Mid-Lothian Mines Park, which has been donated to the County of Chesterfield and is operated by the county's Parks Department.



## **PARTNERSHIP WITH SCHOOLS**

The Department has a shared-use agreement with School Board to use, manage and maintain selected outdoor athletic facilities throughout system, primarily at elementary and middle schools and limited at high schools. Heavy-use sites are middle schools. Department has use after 5 p.m., Monday - Friday and full use on weekends. Many of the facilities are lighted. Department also uses, via reservation system, gyms and classrooms in middle and elementary schools for indoor sports and recreation programs. The School Board has approved new daily start times for the 2018-19 school year, which shifts the high schools to a later schedule and the middle schools to a more consistent earlier schedule. This schedule shift may impact the current shared-use agreement, as schools adjust field use times, and availability for Parks and Recreation. The school fields are not lighted, which may put pressure on County facilities for use by school teams in the evening.

## **FUNDING**

The department is funded through two budgets. The Operating budget covers staffing, programs, events, materials and equipment and general service needs. The Capital Improvement Program provides for all capital or major maintenance projects in excess of \$100,000. Budgets are developed for a 5-year planning period. The Board of Supervisors appropriates/approves the current year expenditures and adopts future years in-concept. The current operating budget is \$10.6 million. The CIP for park improvements is \$2.75 million for FY17 and \$2.22 million for FY18, and in aggregate \$14.02 million for FY18-22. The CIP for all departmental projects is in aggregate \$29.19 million for FY18-22. Supplemental funding is derived from state and federal grants, typically for park acquisition and development. Operation is supplemented by fees and charges for programs, services and facility rental.

# Parks and Facilities

The Chesterfield County park system consists of 56 park sites and 11 athletic complexes, totaling 4,734 acres. Of these park sites, 14 are undeveloped and serve as a means to reserve green space as the county grows and additional parks and facilities are required to meet demand.

There are currently 224 athletic fields, 194 courts, and over 40 miles of trails under county management for public use, including some shared-use facilities at school sites.

The Department has seen a tremendous growth in park visitation over the course of the last 15 years. Visitation totaled 5.4 million in 2015; nearly a 70% increase from 3.2 million in 2000. This growth could be attributed to many factors, including a growing population and more diverse offerings of parks, facilities, and programs.

## PARK CLASSIFICATIONS

Park sites are classified into five main categories which are differentiated by size, service radius, and types of recreational uses.



### Regional Parks

*100 acres or greater, 5 mile service radius*

Regional parks are large tracts that typically offer a wide variety of active and passive recreational facilities. Facilities could include athletic fields, community centers, restrooms, concessions court games, playgrounds, picnic shelters, walking/biking trails, boating/fishing access points, and spectator facilities adjacent to athletic fields.

Rockwood Park, pictured here, is one of five regional park sites in the county. One of these sites (Horner Park) is currently undeveloped.

## Community Parks

*21-99 acres or greater, 3 mile service radius*

Like regional parks, community parks can offer many different types of recreational facilities. Several community parks are athletics focused, while others offer a mix of active and passive facilities.

There are 17 community park sites in the county, three of which are undeveloped. Stratton Park, pictured on the right, is currently an athletic site with two synthetic turf soccer fields. Future development of this site will add passive recreational facilities such as trails and picnic areas.



## Neighborhood Parks

*5-20 acres or greater, 1.5 mile service radius*

Neighborhood parks can offer a variety of recreational facilities, and can be stand-alone sites or located at schools.

There are 12 neighborhood parks in the county. Fernbrook Park, shown here, is an example of a park site located centrally in a neighborhood where residents have convenient walking or biking access to recreational facilities.



## Urban Parks

*0.5-5 acres or greater, 1.5 mile service radius*

Urban parks are intended to serve high intensity areas where sufficient park acreage is difficult to acquire and where parkland would enhance existing or planned development. These parks are meant to complement, not replace, neighborhood parks and to provide linkages within mixed use areas and to the county's parks and open space network.

There are currently no urban parks within the County Park and Recreation system, but urbanizing areas of the County including but not limited to Bon Air, Northern Jefferson Davis, and Chester would be appropriate locations for the development of urban parks.



## **Special Purpose Parks**

*No acreage or service radius standard*

Special purpose parks are centered around unique environmental, cultural, or historical features. They offer passive recreational facilities such as trails, playgrounds, picnic areas, water access for boating or fishing, special events areas and interpretive/educational features showcasing the unique aspects of the site. For example, the Henricus Historical Park pictured to the right is a living history museum showcasing early Virginia history. Special purpose parks may also include amenities that allow them to also serve as neighborhood or community parks.

A specific type of special purpose parks is a conservation area. Conservation areas preserve dedicated environmental or historical resources and may have conservation easements or other restrictions placed on future development. Park is other classifications (neighborhood, community, regional) may also have conservation easements or development restrictions placed on some or all of the park acreage. For example, Adkins Acres Park, which is a 122 acre undeveloped Community Park, has conservation easements along its river frontage, limiting potential future development of the park.

There are 30 special purpose parks in the county, eight of which are undeveloped.

# Parks & Athletic Complexes

Chesterfield County, Virginia  
Department of Parks and Recreation



## COUNTY PARK DATA

Total Park Acreage: 4,734  
Total Number of Park Sites: 55  
Number of School Complex Sites: 11

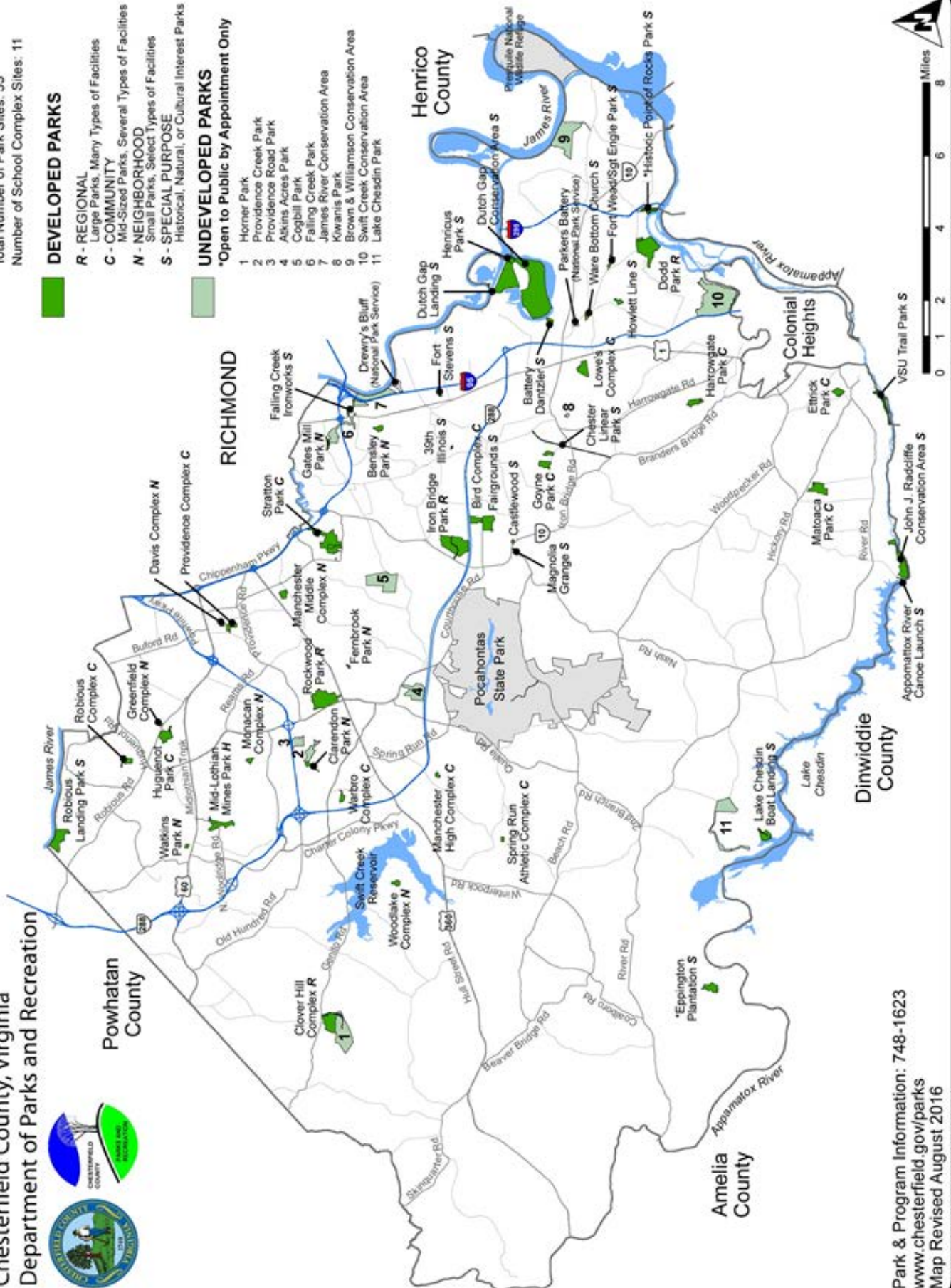
## DEVELOPED PARKS

- R - REGIONAL**  
Large Parks, Many Types of Facilities
- C - COMMUNITY**  
Mid-Sized Parks, Several Types of Facilities
- N - NEIGHBORHOOD**  
Small Parks, Select Types of Facilities
- S - SPECIAL PURPOSE**  
Historical, Natural, or Cultural Interest Parks

## UNDEVELOPED PARKS

\*Open to Public by Appointment Only

- 1 Horner Park
- 2 Providence Creek Park
- 3 Providence Road Park
- 4 Atkins Acres Park
- 5 Cogbill Park
- 6 Falling Creek Park
- 7 James River Conservation Area
- 8 Kwanis Park
- 9 Brown & Williamson Conservation Area
- 10 Swift Creek Conservation Area
- 11 Lake Chesdin Park



Park & Program Information: 748-1623  
[www.chesterfield.gov/parks](http://www.chesterfield.gov/parks)  
Map Revised August 2016



# Park and Athletic Facilities

KEY ■ facility    ⚡ lighted facility    R=group shelter reservations accepted    A=visitation by appointment only  
L=leased site    S=school grounds

	limited access	facility acreage	picnic shelter	picnic area	playground	trails (fitness trail denoted with *)	historical	fishing	river access	restrooms	concession	baseball/softball	football	soccer (accommodates other uses also)	tennis	basketball	volleyball	horseshoes	special features and addresses
Appomattox River Canoe Launch		2		■		■		■	■										21501 Chesdin Road South Chesterfield, VA 23803
Atkins Acres Park	A	122																	5450 Courthouse Rd. Chesterfield, VA 23832
Battery Dantzler		16				■	■												1820 Battery Dantzler Road Chester, VA 23836
Bensley Park		17	■	■	■	■				■	■	■	■		■				Community Building 2900 Drewry's Bluff Road North Chesterfield, VA 23237
Bird Athletic Complex	S	33	■	■	■					■	■	⚡		⚡					Disabled children's baseball field 10401 Courthouse Road Chesterfield, VA 23832
Brown & Williamson Conservation Area	A	265																	2800 Bermuda Hundred Road Chester, VA 23836
Castlewood	A	4					■												10201 Iron Bridge Road Chesterfield, VA 23832
Chester Linear Park		12				■													11801 Womack Road Chesterfield, VA 23831
Clarendon Park		15			■	■													2428 Brookforest Road Midlothian, VA 23112
Clover Hill Athletic Complex		100								■	■	⚡		⚡					17701 Genito Road Moseley, VA 23120
Cogbill Park	A	212																	6700 Cogbill Road Chesterfield, VA 23832
Davis Athletic Complex	S	14												■					415 S. Providence Road North Chesterfield, VA 23235
Dutch Gap Boat Landing		1						■	■										441 Coxendale Road Chester, VA 23836
Dutch Gap Conservation Area		796	■	■		■	■	■	■	■									341 Henricus Park Road Chester, VA 23836
Eppington Plantation	A	44					■												14602 Eppes Falls Road Chesterfield, VA 23838
Etrick Park		28	R	■	■	■				■	■	⚡	⚡		⚡	⚡	■	■	Community Building 20621 Woodpecker Road Etrick, VA 23803
Falling Creek Ironworks		9				■	■												2046 Marina Drive North Chesterfield, VA 23234
Falling Creek Linear Park	A	83					■												6200 Jefferson Davis Hwy North Chesterfield, VA 23234
Fernbrook Park		4	■	■	■														9270 Chatham Grove Lane North Chesterfield, VA 23236
Fort Stevens		2				■	■												8900 Pams Avenue North Chesterfield, VA 23237
Fort Wead		1				■	■												1107 Greylodge Boulevard Chester, VA 23836
Gates Mill Park		12				■	■												3000 Cogbill Road North Chesterfield, VA 23234
Goyne Park		49	R	■	■					■	■	⚡	⚡	■	⚡				Disc Golf Course 5300 Ecoff Road Chester, VA 23831
Greenfield Athletic Complex	S	5												■					10751 Savoy Road North Chesterfield, VA 23235
Harrowgate Park		35	R	■	■	■*				■	■	⚡	⚡		⚡	⚡	■	■	4000 Cougar Trail Chester, VA 23831
Harry G. Daniel Park at Iron Bridge		187	R	■	■	■				■	■	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡	■	■	Handball / Racquetball Courts 6600 White Pine Road Chesterfield, VA 23237
Henricus Historical Park		16		■		■	■	■	■	■									Visitors Center / Gift Shop/Gazebo 251 Henricus Road Chester, VA 23831
Historic Point of Rocks Park	A	30				■	■		■										1005 Enon Church Road Chester, VA 23836
Howlett Line		13				■	■												14100 Howlett Line Drive South Chesterfield, VA 23834

# Park and Athletic Facilities

KEY ■ facility    ⚡ lighted facility    R=group shelter reservations accepted    A=visitation by appointment only  
L=leased site    S=school grounds

		limited access	facility acreage	picnic shelter	picnic area	playground	trails (fitness trail denoted with *)	historical	fishing	river access	restrooms	concession	baseball/softball	football	soccer (accommodates other uses also)	tennis	basketball	volleyball	horseshoes	special features and addresses
Huguenot Park			57	R	■	■	■*				■	■			■	⚡	⚡	■	■	Azalea Garden 10901 Robious Road North Chesterfield, VA 23235
Irvin J. Horner Park	A		217																	4351 Moseley Road Moseley, VA 23120
John J. Radcliffe Conservation Area			97				■		■	■										21501 Chesdin Road South Chesterfield, VA 23803
Kiwanis Park	A		5																	12321 Richmond Street Chester, VA 23831
Lake Chesdin Boat Landing			43		■				■	■										Boat Slide & Fishing Pier 21900 Lake Chesdin Parkway Chesterfield, VA 23838
Lake Chesdin Park	A		110																	14800 N. Ivey Mill Road Chesterfield, VA 23838
Lowes Soccer Complex	L		57	■	■										■					2651 Weir Place Chester, VA 23831
Magnolia Grange	A		1					■												10020 Iron Bridge Road Chesterfield, VA 23832
Manchester High Complex	S		9								■	■	⚡							12501 Bailey Bridge Road Midlothian, VA 23112
Manchester Middle Complex	S		31								■	■	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡				7401 Hull Street Road North Chesterfield, VA 23235
Mary B. Stratton Park Sports Fields			167								■			⚡	⚡					Synthetic Turf Fields 5201 Ridgedale Parkway North Chesterfield, VA 23234
Matoaca Park			69	■	■	■	■				■	■	⚡	⚡		⚡	⚡			19900 Holloway Avenue Matoaca, VA 23803
Mid-Lothian Mines			43				■	■												13301 N. Woolridge Road Midlothian, VA 23114
Midlothian Middle Complex	S		19								■	■	⚡	⚡	⚡	⚡				13501 Midlothian Turnpike Midlothian, VA 23113
Monacan Athletic Complex	S		12								■				■					11501 Smoketree Drive Richmond, VA 23236
Providence Athletic Complex	S		23								■	■	⚡		■	■				900 Starlight Lane North Chesterfield, VA 23235
Providence Creek Park	A		55																	2451 Providence Creek Road North Chesterfield, VA 23236
Providence Road Park	A		49																	11000 W. Providence Road North Chesterfield, VA 23236
R. Garland Dodd Park at Point of Rocks			176	R	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	⚡	⚡	■	⚡	⚡	■	■	Floating Boardwalk 201 Enon Church Road Chester, VA 23836
Robious Athletic Complex	S		28								■	■	⚡	⚡	⚡					2801 Robious Crossing Drive Midlothian, VA 23113
Robious Landing Park			102	R	■	■	■		■	■	■							■		Boat Slide 3800 James River Road Midlothian, VA 23113
Rockwood Park			171	R	■	■	■*				■	■	⚡			⚡	⚡	■	■	Nature Center, Dog Park, Archery 3401 Courthouse Road North Chesterfield, VA 23236
Salem Church Mini Park			4				■													5200 Lockberry Ridge Drive North Chesterfield, VA 23237
Sgt. James Engle Park			12				■	■												13920 Tobacco Bay Place Chester, VA 23836
Swift Creek Conservation Area	A		447																	16210 Continental Boulevard South Chesterfield, VA 23834
Warbro Athletic Complex	L		35								■	■	⚡							3204 Warbro Road Midlothian, VA 23112
Ware Bottom Church Battlefield	A		10				■	■												1600 Old Bermuda Hundred Road Chester, VA 23836
Watkins Annex Park			6				■				■				⚡		⚡			13801 Westfield Road Midlothian, VA 23113
Woodlake Athletic Complex	S		16		■						■	■			■					5700 Woodlake Village Parkway Midlothian, VA 23112

## SECTION III - PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

---

### Reflection on 2002 Parks and Recreation Master Plan

#### 2002 PLAN OVERVIEW

In 2002 the Department of Parks and Recreation worked with the public, consultants, county staff, and key stakeholders to update the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The process involved public meetings, surveys, demographic analysis, a Facility Needs Assessment, and departmental feedback. Out of these findings, the team identified four main ideas:

- Take care of what we have
- Increase system diversity
- Protect natural systems and historic resources
- Utilized public and private partnerships.

From these ideas and findings, the team developed a set of goals and specific objectives, which included:

- Acquisition of parkland in advance of growth areas to support new regional, community, neighborhood, and special purpose parks
- The development of set of distributed community centers
- Renovation and replacement of aging facilities
- Addressing the changing needs in athletic facilities
- Increasing the diversity of recreational opportunities

#### ACCOMPLISHMENTS

##### Take Care of What You Have

Funding increased for system wide major maintenance and facility replacements, and many improvements were made system wide. Funding from the 2004 Bond Referendum and subsequent Capital Improvement Programs allowed for specific major athletic complex upgrades and renovations:

*Rockwood Park, Huguenot Park, Bird Complex, Daniel CBC Baseball, Robious Complex, Manchester Complex, Midlothian Middle Complex, and Manchester Middle Complex.*

In 2016, the department created a Trails Crew, a two-person team to provide dedicated maintenance and renovation to expanded trail system within parks. Park Operations was reorganized in 2006 to combine school and park maintenance into a unified team and expanded satellite districts from four to six to reduce drive time and increase efficiencies of work effort.

##### Increase System Diversity

##### *Additional Unique Facilities*

Several recreational facilities were added that were not previously part of the park system: Rockwood Dog Park, Goyne Park Disc Golf Course, Robious Landing Park rowing boathouse and launch dock. The Department partnered with Manchester YMCA to open a Skateboard Park and later with X-Zone for skateboard facilities.

### *Inclusive Facilities*

The Department has also been increasing the inventory of facilities that are inclusive for all abilities. The County added two Universal Playgrounds for children with disabilities, “A Playground for Katie and Friends” at Huguenot Park and the Boundless Playground at Bird Athletic Complex. The County also added Miracle Field baseball field, designed and managed for special needs children.

### *Trail System*

The trail system was expanded to include three type of user experience; paved, and stone dust surface trails were added to compliment natural surface trails typically found in park system. It is now a departmental standard that all parks contain all three types of trails. Working with the Planning Department, Parks and Recreation assisted in creation of county-wide bikeways and trails plan as part of non-motorized new chapter in the comprehensive plan.

### *Athletic Facilities*

The Department supported the addition of lacrosse and field hockey sports leagues and clubs. Synthetic surface sports fields were added at Stratton Park and Rivercity Sportsplex, which is an improved surface over grass for field hockey and lacrosse.

### *Historical Interpretation*

Historical interpretation time periods were expanded to include mining era at Midlothian Mines Park. The coverage of the Civil War in the County was strengthened with the addition of four new interpretive Civil War sites.

### *Programming*

Diversity of programming was increased with multigenerational events such as movie night, Kite Day and expanded programming for 4th of July and at Henricus and Midlothian Mines Parks. Senior programming was expanded through by use of church space rentals.

## **Protect Natural Systems and Historic Resources**

Special purpose parks have expanded greatly to protect and make available to the public some of the unique natural environments and wild places of Chesterfield County and historical stories of the nation. Over 900 acres of natural areas have been acquired, most by donation and grants. These areas include Swift Creek Conservation Area, James River Conservation Area, Radcliffe Conservation Area, Historic Point of Rocks, and Atkins and Robious Landing. Portions of other parks in the system have been given conservation status. Recorded conservation easements were placed on Swift Creek, Atkins, Battery Dantzler, James River CA and Historic Point of Rocks.

Several historical sites highlighting civil war history were added to the system. They include Historic Point of Rocks on the Appomattox River and James River Conservation Area on the James River. These sites showcase naval engagements and union field hospital stories. Two other sites related to Civil War history were also added: Sgt. Engle’s and 38th Illinois parks. These sites are significant for specific battle engagements of the Bermuda Hundred campaign. The park system also added several sites that are significant in other historic time periods. The new Kiwanis Park site showcases the early history of Chester and Pleasantview School House and the African American educational experience. The Department also expanded Howlett Line, Battery Dantzler and Falling Creek Ironworks parks. Beyond these sites, the Department added another 62 acres of special purpose parks.

## **Utilize Public and Private Partnerships**

The Parks and Recreation Department continued its strong relationships with historical foundations and Chesterfield Historic Society of Virginia to deliver programming, special events, and new facilities. Midlothian Mines and Railroad Foundation was created to support the Midlothian mines park and Midlothian village industrial story.

The Department worked with area churches to expand program spaces for seniors to expand number and diversity of activities.

The Department continued regional partnerships with private organizations such as FOLAR, JRAC, and CRLC and public organization such as PDC's in Richmond and Crater Planning District.

The Department maintained a strong relationship with co-sponsored athletic and other recreation private groups to provide activities in 10 sports and multitude of other recreation pursuits. A new collaboration with an organization, Sports Backers, allowed the Department to create new events in the County such as Henricus Dauber Dash and Tacky Lights Run. The partnership with Sports Backers supports tourism in the historical sphere, and in the health and wellness sphere, is a major contributor to the Bikeways and trails team for citizen advocacy.

In 2011 the Department began new collaboration with Richmond Regional Tourism to promote sports events within the county, particularly at the River City Sportsplex [Sports Quest] 12 field synthetic turf complex. This partnership solidified with County's purchase of the facility in 2016.

Parks and Recreation created several new permanent partnerships within the county government with Planning and Environmental Management departments. These intra-governmental partnerships have leveraged resources towards common goals and objectives.

# COUNTY RESOURCES

Chesterfield County is home to many unique natural, historical and cultural resources which have allowed for considerable diversity in recreational opportunities. A part of the Parks and Recreation mission is to preserve and enhance these assets to the greatest extent possible for public appreciation, education and enjoyment.

## NATURAL RESOURCES

The county is situated between two major waterways; the James River serves as a portion of the northern and northeastern county boundary and the Appomattox River together with Lake Chesdin serve as the majority of the southern boundary. Two major tributaries run through the county and feed these two rivers. Swift Creek, including the 61.9 square mile Swift Creek Reservoir, extends from the northwestern to the southeastern county boundary where it feeds into the Appomattox River. Falling Creek, a tributary of the James River, runs from the Midlothian area to Route 1 near Chippenham Parkway at the eastern boundary. There are several county parks fronting these waterways which provide opportunities for boating, fishing, nature observation and water based programs such as kayaking and paddle boarding.

Centrally located in the county is the 8,115-acre Pocahontas State Park, the largest state park in Virginia. This park includes an aquatic center, visitor center, campgrounds, shelters, meeting spaces, amphitheater, over 60 miles of trails, and a 225-acre lake along Swift Creek available for fishing and non-motorized boating.



*The 810-acre Dutch Gap Conservation Area surrounds Henricus Historical Park and features diverse woodlands, wetlands, and the old meandering channel of the James River. The area is host to a walking trail, paddle trail, boat launch, and observation blind.*

## HISTORICAL RESOURCES

The history Chesterfield County features many names, places and events that have shaped our cultural and physical landscape. The diversity of stories to tell stemming from these historic resources provides many opportunities for education, tourism, and unique recreational experiences.

Henricus Historical Park includes a re-creation of the 1611 Citie of Henricus, site of the second successful English settlement in the New World. Henricus offers pre-colonial English and Indian living history experiences in addition to Civil War programs.

Other historical points of interest include Eppington Plantation built circa 1768, the earliest commercially mined coal in North America preserved at Mid-Lothian Mines and Railroad Park, the earliest iron furnace in the New World at the 1619 Ironworks on Falling Creek, the historic village of Bon Air which was established as a resort town in the late 1880's, and the village of Ettrick which was established as a Mill town with flourishing textile mills and home to one of the earliest African American colleges in the country with Virginia State University. In the county courthouse area there is the Chesterfield County Museum, Historic 1892 Jail, the 1822 Magnolia Grange Museum House, Castlewood and the 1917 Courthouse.

In addition, the county manages numerous civil war sites that interpret the 1864 Bermuda Hundred Campaign of the American Civil War. The Chesterfield Historical Society of Virginia (CHS) leases a number of historic structures from Chesterfield County and offers interpretation and public access to these important sites. CHS is committed to working with the county to identify and preserve what remains of Chesterfield's rich heritage.



*Gazebo at Henricus Historical Park overlooking the James River.*

The historic sites are integrated into the park system as a whole. They serve the larger system as well as providing unique and quality experiences within the County.

- Recreational programs are held at historical sites
- Historic sites serve as neighborhood and community parks
- Historic sites provide unique learning opportunities for school groups and County visitors
- There are 14 County-operated interpretive historic sites in Chesterfield County

# Natural & Cultural Resources

Chesterfield County, Virginia  
Department of Parks and Recreation



## Map Data

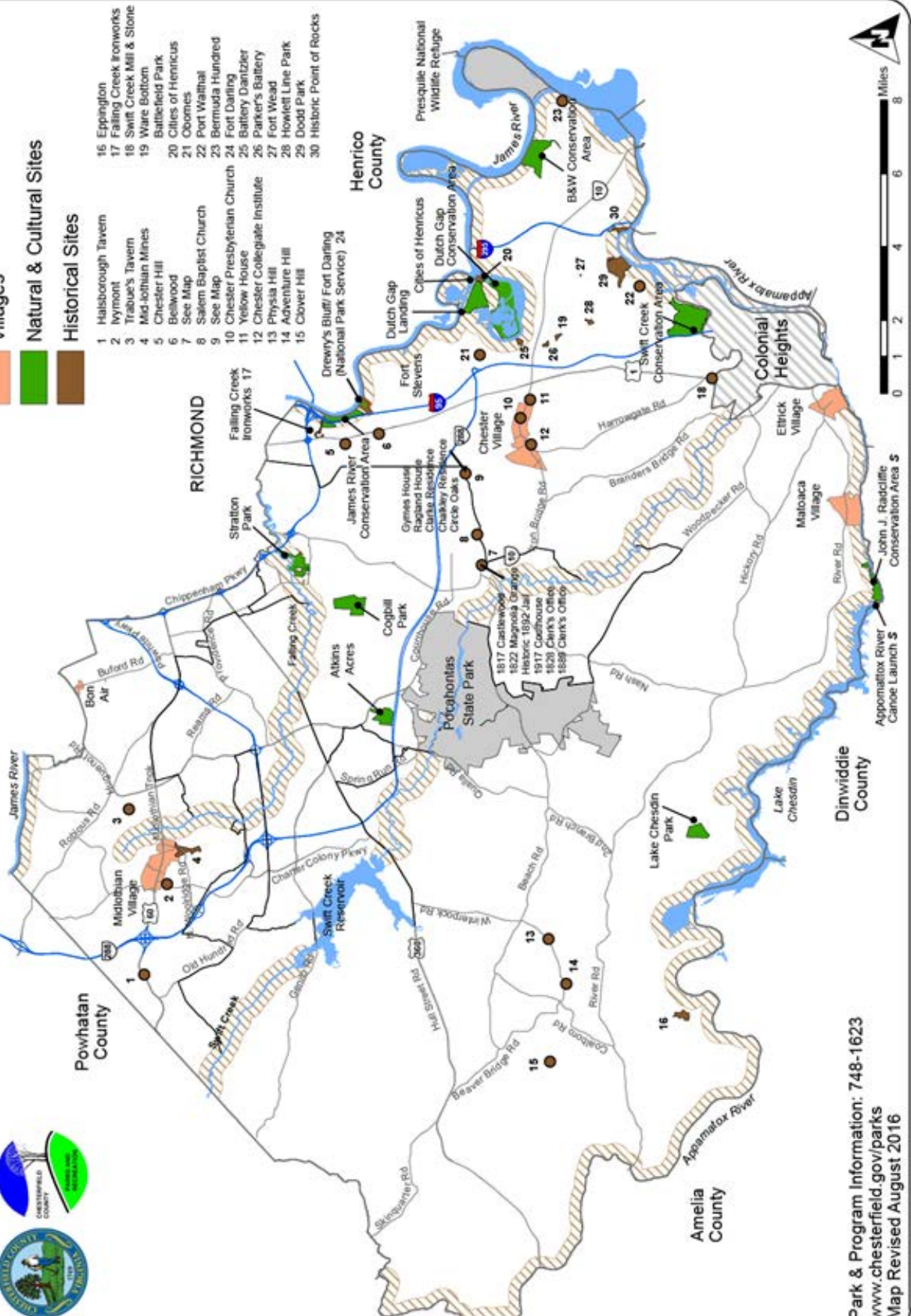
Major Stream/Corridors & Rivers

Villages

Natural & Cultural Sites

Historical Sites

- 1 Halsborough Tavern
- 2 Ivymont
- 3 Trahou's Tavern
- 4 Mid-Jothian Mines
- 5 Chester Hill
- 6 Bellwood
- 7 See Map
- 8 Salem Baptist Church
- 9 See Map
- 10 Chester Presbyterian Church
- 11 Yellow House
- 12 Chester Collegiate Institute
- 13 Physia Hill
- 14 Adventure Hill
- 15 Clover Hill
- 16 Eppington
- 17 Falling Creek Ironworks
- 18 Swift Creek Mill & Stone
- 19 Ware Bottom
- 20 Battlefield Park
- 21 Odomes
- 22 Port Walthall
- 23 Bermuda Hundred
- 24 Fort Darling
- 25 Battery Dantzler
- 26 Parker's Battery
- 27 Fort Wead
- 28 Howlett Line Park
- 29 Dodd Park
- 30 Historic Point of Rocks



Park & Program Information: 748-1623  
www.chesterfield.gov/parks  
Map Revised August 2016

# Recreation Trends

## Key Findings

- Park visitation in Chesterfield is increasing
- Popularity of fitness sports is increasing while popularity of team sports is decreasing
- Participation in outdoor sports and fitness sports have the greatest levels of participation across all generations
- Active Adults (aged 55+) prefer passive outdoor activities
- Marketing and promotion of activities, services, and facilities must keep pace

## NATIONAL TRENDS

Nationally, the activity level of Americans remains steady. There has been variation in the quantity and quality of exercise, but the percentage of inactive people has averaged 27.7% since 2011. The percentage of people age 6 and up who participate at least once a week in a high calorie burning activity has dropped slightly from 45.9% in 2011 to 42% in 2016. Most activity categories showed a moderate increase in participation, with fitness sports having the most gain, increasing by 2% from 2015 to 2016. The three activity categories with the most participation are fitness sports, individual sports, and outdoor sports. These categories have been the most popular for the last five years.

Outdoor sports and fitness sports have the greatest participation across all generations. Team sports had the greatest variation in popularity; 57% of those aged 17 and under were involved, while only 6% of the Baby Boomer generation (those aged 53-74) were involved. The sports activities that most interest those aged 55 and up are camping, bicycling, birdwatching/wildlife viewing, fishing, and swimming for fitness. Most of these are passive outdoor activities.

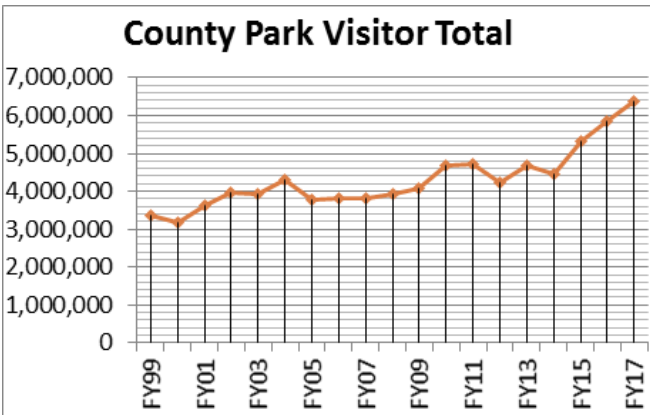
The most popular activity in 2016 across all generations was walking for fitness, perhaps because of its low barrier to entry for equipment cost and ability level. Day hiking, running/jogging, fishing, bicycling, bowling, and using free weights are also very popular activities.

Fitness sports saw the greatest increase in all around participation over the last 5 years averaging 4% participation growth, including swimming for fitness, High Intensity Interval Training (HIIT), barre, and tai chi.. Outdoor activities also saw high increases in participation, particularly stand up paddle boarding, kayaking, and rock climbing. Individual sports is the third most popular sports category, with 35% of individuals participating. Sports in this category with growing participation are trail running, triathlons, and adventure racing. Many team sports have shown low to moderate growth, with football, basketball, and outdoor soccer all showing declines in participation levels. Despite this decline, basketball is still the most popular team sport. Cardio tennis and pickleball are two racket sports rapidly gaining in popularity.

This national sports participation data is derived from the Sports and Fitness Industry Association's 2017 Sports, Fitness, and Leisure Activities Topline Participation Report. This information provides a baseline for the County to plan for shifts in recreational preferences, but the County should give preference to local activity data in order to best serve Chesterfield County citizens.

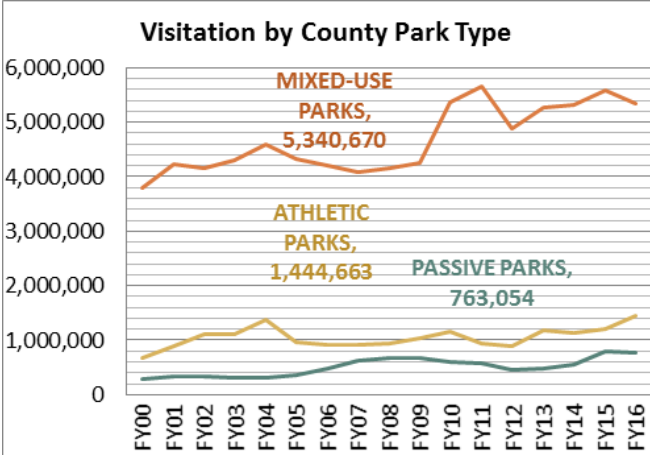
LOCAL TRENDS

County park visitation has been increasing steadily since 1999. Current data indicates that over 6 million people visited one of the parks in 2017. This increase is due to the growing population within the County, a greater offering and diversity of park sites and programs, and an increased social media presence promoting park system activities and facilities. Park visitation is increasing at a faster rate than population growth, which indicates the value and interest citizens have in the outdoors. From 2000 to 2017, there has been a 101% increase in park visitation, while over the same time period, County population increased by 30%. Since 2014, there has been a sharp increase in the visitation rate. The average increase over these three years was 13%, compared with an average of 2% in the 15 years prior.



The County also examined park visitation by category of park visited. Mixed use parks like Rockwood Park feature both active and passive recreation, athletic parks like Clover Hill Athletic Complex predominately feature sports fields, and passive parks like Dutch Gap Conservation Area feature natural space and passive activities. Mixed use parks consistently see the highest use of any category of County park, which is consistent with their diversity of attractions. All park types have seen an increase in visitation totals since 2000, but mixed parks are growing in popularity faster than either of the other two types of parks.

The County has been tracking trends in athletic participation as well as park visitation. Overall youth participation in County-sponsored organized athletics is down. This may be partly attributed to the difficulty existing co-sponsored groups are experiencing with securing volunteer coaches and administrators to operate the youth leagues. Participation in softball, cheerleading, lacrosse, baseball, football, field hockey, and volleyball are all in decline. Soccer and basketball have increasing participation levels. Some of these participation trends are opposite of national trends, which identify soccer and basketball as decreasing, softball and baseball as steady, and cheerleading and volleyball as increasing. Preference should be given to local trends when determining County levels of service. Many sports are transitioning to travel or all-star teams in lieu of traditional leagues. These groups typically rent fields for practices in games as opposed to being assigned fields by the department. National and local trends are in agreement over the decline of lacrosse, field hockey, and football. Chesterfield County does not need to increase the quantity of these fields and may even wish to convert some of them to higher priority uses. Chesterfield will need to continue to provide rectangular fields for soccer, as participation in co-sponsored athletic group is rising and demand for rental fields is rising.



Parks offering multiple experiences and activities for all ages are the most used

Overall adult sports participation is also in decline, though adult softball has seen a long-term participation increase of 100% between 2006 and 2016 based on County-collected participation data. The overall decline may be due, in part, to the elimination of all county offered adult athletic programs in 2010. The County will need to continue to monitor participation rates to see if it continues its recent downward trend, or continues its long-term rise in popularity.

Sports leagues are most popular among youth, so as their share of the population falls and the percentage of those age 55 and above rises, the County will need to assess the level of organized sports programs and sports fields needed for each population cohort.

## Findings - Recreation

- **Park visitation in Chesterfield County is increasing**

The citizens of Chesterfield County are active users of the parks and programs in the County. Park visitation is increasing at a faster rate than the population is growing, which means that people are attracted to and appreciate the activities and amenities offered by the County. Between 2000 and 2017 park visitation rose by 101%, while over the same period population grew by 30%. Mixed use parks that feature both passive activities like trails and active uses like sports fields are the most visited parks, which is consistent with their diversity of attractions.

- **Popularity of fitness sports is rising while popularity of team sports is falling**

Nationally, fitness sports saw the greatest increase in all around participation over the last five years, increasing by 4%. National trends indicate that interest in team sports is high for those 17 and under, but falls sharply for older age groups. In Chesterfield County, all team sports except for soccer and basketball have declining participation numbers. The youth population is predicted to decrease in Chesterfield County over the next 20 years while the active adult (age 55+) is expected to increase. Therefore, the focus of the Parks and Recreation department should shift away from programming team sports activities and constructing sports fields, except for soccer and basketball, and towards programs and amenities that support fitness sports and pickup games. The County will need to periodically evaluate the need for additional athletic facilities by all groups, including adult, tournaments, and private leagues, to ensure that there is a sufficient number of facilities provided.

- **Participation in outdoor sports and fitness sports have the greatest levels of participation across all generations**

People of all ages enjoy being active outside. As Chesterfield County strives to build multi-functional spaces that serve a variety of users, focusing on outdoor activities is an efficient way to allocate resources. The most popular activity for the last several years across all age groups is walking for fitness, so developing trails at all parks is an important way to serve citizens.

- **Active adults (aged 55+) prefer passive outdoor activities**

The sports activities that most interest those aged 55 and up are camping, bicycling, birdwatching/wildlife viewing, fishing, and swimming for fitness. Most of these activities are passive activities in natural areas. The population of Chesterfield County is projected to be more than one-third active older adults by 2040, so the parks and recreation department needs to shift focus to this age group. Chesterfield County currently has many natural areas, and should continue to maintain and develop these areas with amenities that match the preferences of this age group.

- **Marketing and promotion of activities, services, and facilities must keep pace.**

To support the department's initiative to promote citizens participation in programs and facility visitation and to bring in revenue, the marketing efforts of the department must be enhanced. Increased marketing will help to offset the trend of declining participation in athletic programs. Social media is a free marketing tool that the County can use to promote activities as well as engage in dialogue with citizens. Additional feedback from citizens will help in generating data to improve facilities and programs.

## County Demographics

Over the past two decades, the county has experienced substantial changes in total population and demographics. As seen across the nation, the aging baby boomer generation and increase in empty nester households has been a factor in much of this change. This has resulted in steady increase in older population groups and very little change in youth population. Projections forecast a continued slowing of the growth rate due to the aging population and low birth rate trends.

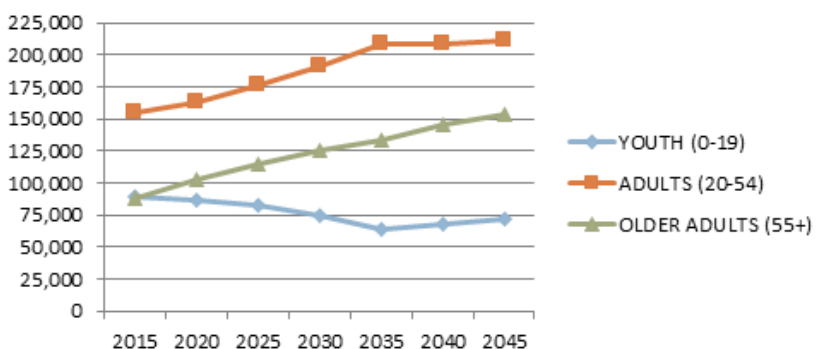
### Key Findings

- The population of Chesterfield is increasing and aging
- Ethnic diversity is increasing in the County
- The County is transforming from rural to suburban, and increasingly, to an urban area
- Chesterfield County is a generally affluent locality, but income is decreasing

### POPULATION AND AGE

Total county population for 2017 is estimated at 340,000; an increase of approximately 30% since the year 2000. The total population is expected to grow by another 27% by 2040, to a total of 422,463 people. Population projections indicate that ages 55+ will be the fastest growing segment of the population, jumping from 26% of the total population in 2015 to 34% in 2040. This is an increase of 66% above 2015 actual population numbers. The 19 and under age group reached its peak in 2015, and will slowly decline in both percentage of the population and actual numbers. The current and projected age makeup of the county is a significant factor when establishing Parks and Recreation facility and program needs.

**Projected Population for Chesterfield County by Age Groups 2015-2045**



Created by: Chesterfield County Planning Department, December 2015

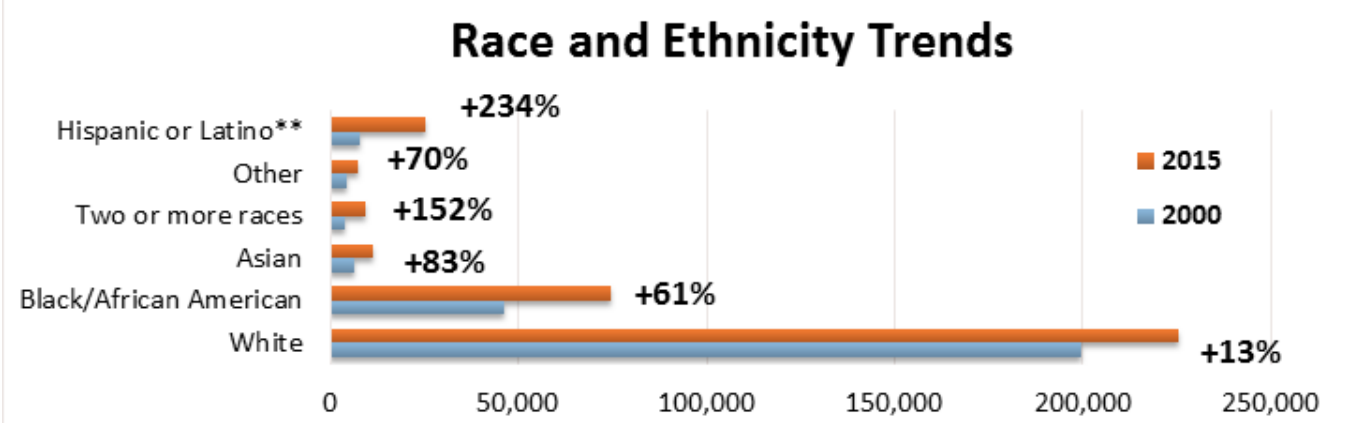
TOTAL POPULATION HAS GROWN BY **30%** SINCE THE YEAR **2000**. POPULATION IS EXPECTED TO GROW ANOTHER **27%** BY **2040**.

**34%** OF THE POPULATION WILL BE OVER THE AGE OF **55** BY THE YEAR **2040**.

YOUTH POPULATION PEAKED IN **2015**.

RACE AND ETHNICITY

Chesterfield County is also experiencing a change in racial and ethnic makeup. In general, minority populations are increasing much more rapidly than the white population, resulting in more ethnic and cultural diversity. In 2010 whites accounted for 75% of the population, compared with 69% in 2015. This trend of increasing diversity is apparent nationally and state-wide.

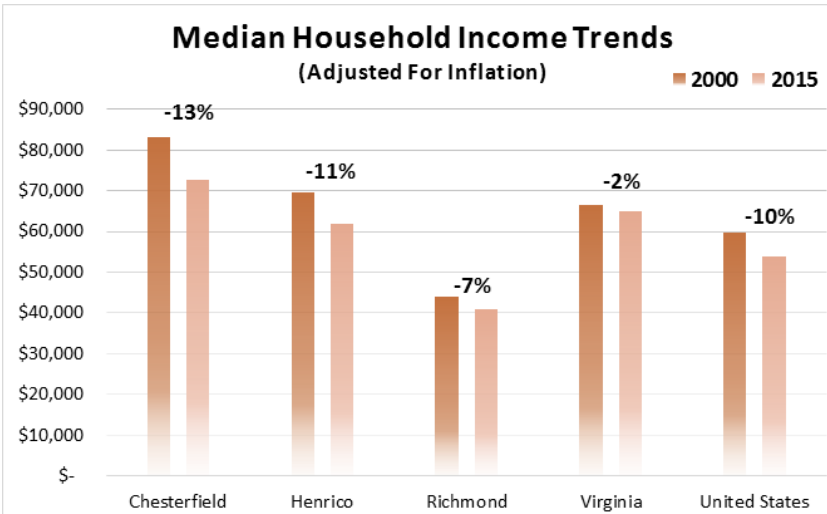


Source: 2015 American Community Survey 5-year estimates, U.S. Census

INCOME AND POVERTY

As of 2015, Chesterfield County’s median household income is \$72,609, which exceeds that of the region, state, and nation and indicates a generally affluent locality. When adjusting for inflation, Chesterfield County saw a higher decline than these areas in median household income with a decrease of 13 percent since 2000.

Poverty is another important economic indicator to consider. As of 2015, Chesterfield County has a poverty rate of 7.4 percent, which accounts for over 24,000 individuals. While the county has a relatively low poverty rate, the number of individuals in poverty is growing with an increase of 110 percent since 2000. The rise in suburban poverty is being seen across the region, state and nation. As cities are redeveloping and seeing stable or declining poverty rates, the inner-ring suburbs are seeing an increase.

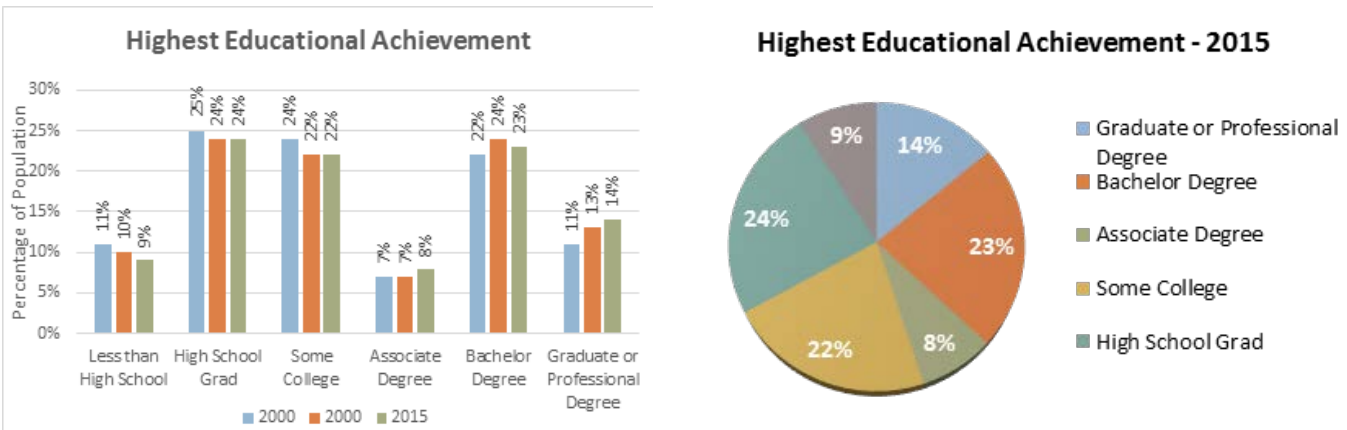


CHANGE IN POVERTY RATES  
2000-2015

- CHESTERFIELD +100%,**  
CURRENT RATE 7.4% (24,000)
- HENRICO +113%,**  
CURRENT RATE 10.7% (33,914)
- RICHMOND +29%,**  
CURRENT RATE 25.5% (51,828)
- VIRGINIA +40%,**  
CURRENT RATE 11.5% (656,641)

## EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

According to the 2015 American Community Survey 5 year estimates, 37 percent of the population 25 years and older received a bachelor's or graduate degree. This implies that Chesterfield County's population is well-educated. While the vast majority of the population graduated high school, it is important to note that 9 percent of people received less than a high school education. Examining U.S. Census data from 2000 and 2010 shows a trend that Chesterfield is becoming a more highly educated locality. Between 2000 and 2015, the percentage of people without a high school degree dropped from 11% to 9% and in the same time period the percentage of people with a bachelor's or graduate degree increased from 33% to 37%. Chesterfield is more highly educated than the state or the country. According to the U.S. Census Bureau in 2015 36% of people aged 25 and older had a bachelors or advanced degree and 30% of those in the Country have that level of degree.

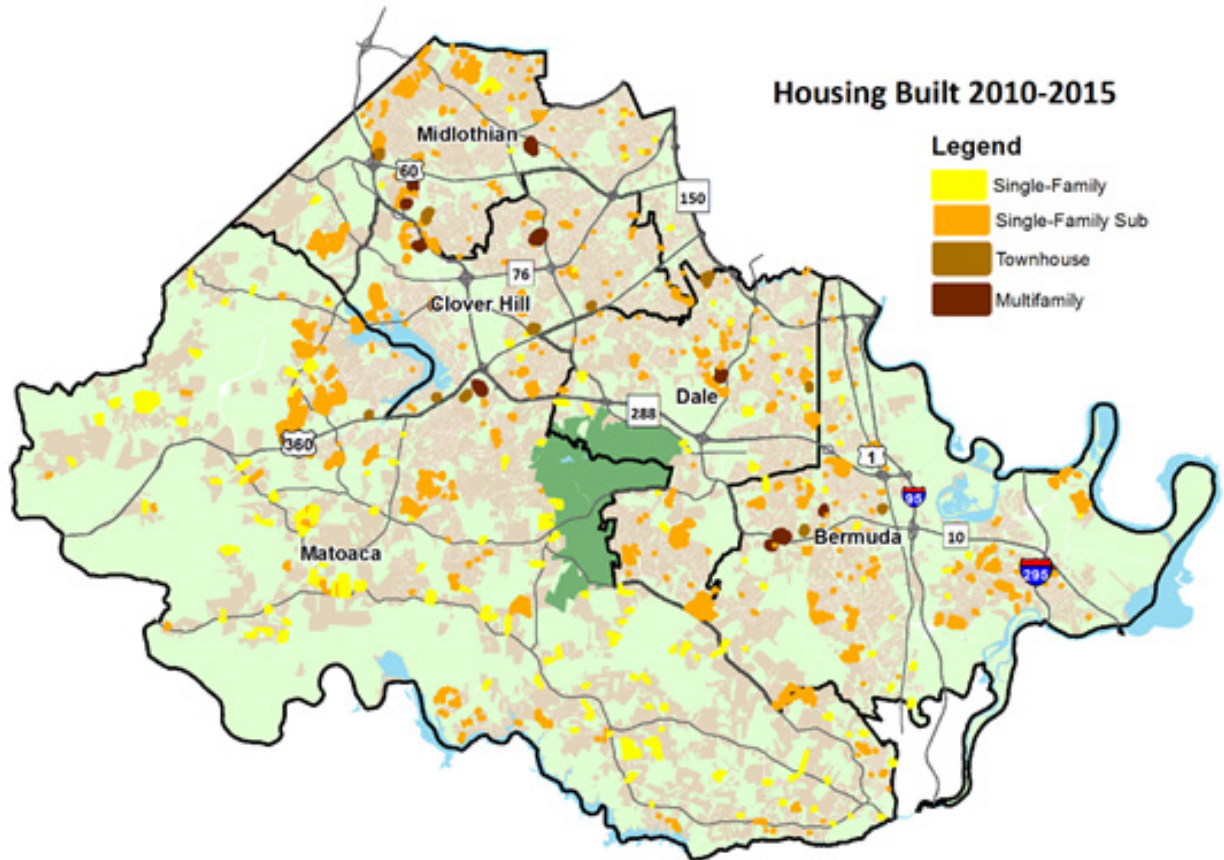


Source: 2015 American Community Survey 5 year estimates and American Community Survey 2010 and 2000 U.S. Census.

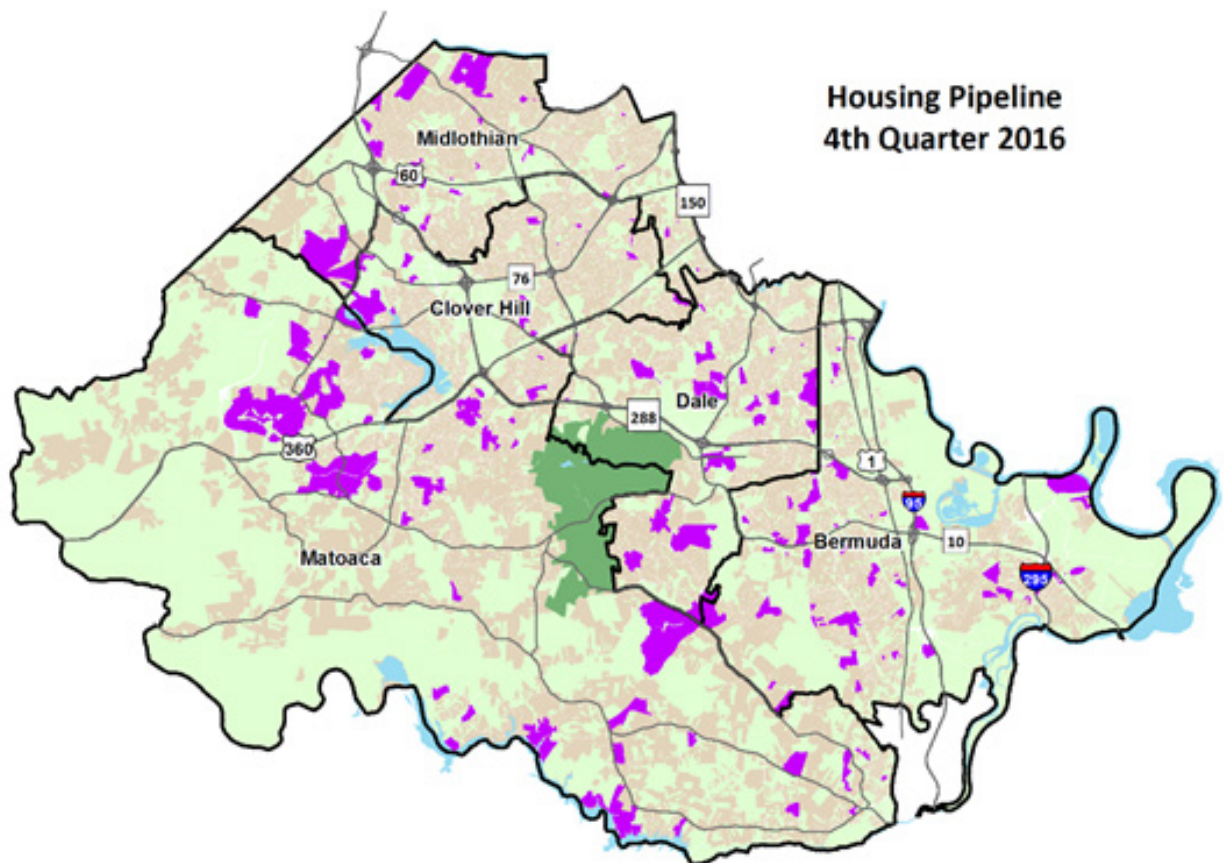
## RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT TRENDS

Since the 1970s Chesterfield County has transformed from a rural county to a suburban, and increasingly, an urban county. Residential construction was at its peak in the mid 1980s and spiked again in the 2000s until the 2008 recession. Building permits were at their lowest point following 2008 and still have not increased to match the previous levels. Typically, most building permits are for single family homes, but the percentage of multi-family permits is increasing. Between 1976 and 2000 single family permits comprised 91% of the requests. Between 2002 and 2016, multi-family building permit jumped to 33% of the requests. This affects the character of Chesterfield County, making it more urban and densely settled than it was in 2000 and before.

Housing growth has occurred throughout the County, with subdivision growth concentrated between Midlothian Turnpike and Hull Street Road. Higher density house growth has mainly occurred within the Route 288 belt and Chester areas. There are over 200 active project relative to housing. These projects would add over 16,000 housing units, equivalent to about 15 years of growth at current levels of activity. Nearly half of the development sites are in the Matoaca district, 17% in Bermuda and Midlothian, 15% in Dale, and 8% in Clover Hill. The Matoaca district, which is the southern and western part of the County, has been the least developed area to date, so County services, including parks and recreation, will need to increase their presence in this area to serve the expanding population.



Created by: Chesterfield County Planning Department, December 2015



Created by: Chesterfield County Planning Department, December 2015

## Findings - Demographics

- **The population of Chesterfield County is increasing and aging**

Chesterfield County has experienced sustained and significant population growth for decades, and this is projected to continue into the next decades. The age distribution of the population is forecast to shift from the current approximate 25% youth, 50% adult, and 25% older adults (55+) to a distribution of approximately 15% youth, 50% adult, and 35% older adult. This is a significant change into an older average population, which will affect programing and demand for amenities. The department will need to shift their focus to correspond with this population change.

- **The County is transforming from rural to suburban, and increasingly, to an urban area**

Since the 1970s the County has been developing farmlands and woodlands into suburban and, increasingly, multi-family and mixed-use developments. Population density has increased dramatically in the Midlothian, Clover Hill, Dale, and Bermuda districts north of Rt. 288 and along the I-95 corridor. Most of the planned future residential development will be in the Matoaca district in the south and west of the county. This area is the least developed part of the County, so the parks and recreation department will need to increase facilities in this area to serve the growing population. It is important to plan for future park and recreation facilities before development takes place, to ensure that land can be acquired.

- **Ethnic diversity is increasing in the County**

Minority populations are increasing much more rapidly than the white population, resulting in more ethnic and cultural diversity. This may affect the type of outreach and publications produced by the department, as well as demand for programs and amenities.

- **Chesterfield County is a generally affluent locality, but income is decreasing**

As of 2015, Chesterfield's median income exceeds that of the region, state, and nation, though is decreasing at a faster rate than any of the compared areas. The County has a lower poverty rate than the surrounding localities or state average, but the department still needs to serve these citizens' needs. As the median income falls, the department may find more people using public facilities and programs rather than private facilities, due to the higher membership fees for private clubs.

# PUBLIC AND STAKEHOLDER INPUT

## Key Findings

- Top amenity priorities are bikeways and trails and water access, both recreational and boating
- High need for additional and well-distributed indoor recreation space
- Most requested additional program are family programs and special events
- High public satisfaction of park maintenance, customer service, programs and wildlife and natural areas

Between 2014 and 2016 there were four community engagement initiatives sponsored by County governmental groups that gathered input on the perceived value and needs of the Parks and Recreation system. A meta-analysis of these surveys, community workshops, and stakeholder meetings was conducted as part of this master plan update and the results compiled into a report. This report identifies recurring themes in the public's comments and ranks their priority rating using quantitative comparisons. The identified priorities informs the recommendations in this master plan. The full stakeholder input report can be seen in Appendix B.

## COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

### Methodology

LPDA identified the highest rated priorities in park and recreation facilities, programs, and organizational structure/management as identified by the public in the 2014 Public Opinion Survey, Blueprint Chesterfield, and the Master Plan Public Forum Meetings. The priorities are listed on a chart, then cross referenced to the other surveys to determine if it was identified as a priority by them as well. Themes identified as priorities receive a 1, themes identified but not as a priority receive a 0, and if a theme was not discussed in a report, then no score was given. The number of times a priority was identified by a report was totaled, with 3 being the highest possible score. Comparing the scores allows us to identify priority themes that are common throughout the surveyed citizen groups.



HIGHEST RATED PRIORITIES FOR THE  
PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

# Priority Themes for Parks and Recreation

Facilities		2014 Public Survey	Blueprint Chesterfield	Public Forum Meetings	Priority Ranking
<i>Park Planning</i>	Bikeways/Trails	1	1	1	3
	Connectivity	1	-	1	2
	Water Access	1	1	1	3
	Additional Parks, Acquire Land	-	1	1	2
<i>Facility Type</i>	Community/Sr. Center	1	1	1	3
<i>Park Features</i>	Rectangular Fields	1	-	-	1
	Playground	1	0	0	1
	Pool/Water Park	1	1	-	2
<i>Park Amenities</i>	Bathrooms	-	-	1	1
	Amenities	-	-	1	1
<i>Atmosphere</i>	Park Maintenance	-	1	1	2
	Safety	0	0	1	1

Programs		2014 Public Survey	Blueprint Chesterfield	Public Forum Meetings	Priority Ranking
	Additional Events	1	1	0	2
	Additional Programs	1	1	1	3

Management		2014 Public Survey	Blueprint Chesterfield	Public Forum Meetings	Priority Ranking
	Good customer service	1	-	1	2
	Additional advertising	-	-	1	1
	Scheduling school fields	1	-	0	1

## Scoring:

- 0 Addressed, but not identified as a priority
- 1 Identified as a priority
- Not addressed

## Results

Several themes were identified in all three surveys as priorities: bikeways/trail, water access, need for a community/senior citizen center, and additional programs. Themes identified as priorities in two of the surveys are: connectivity, additional parks/acquiring land, a pool or water park, park maintenance, additional events, and good customer service. Priorities identified in just one survey are: additional rectangular fields, playgrounds, bathrooms, park amenities, safety, additional advertising, and scheduling of school fields. It is important to note that themes identified as a priority in just one survey have still been identified as a priority, and the parks and recreation department will need to monitor or address this need in the future.

## PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED IN ALL THREE SURVEYS



BIKEWAYS/  
TRAILS



WATER ACCESS



COMMUNITY/  
SENIOR CENTER



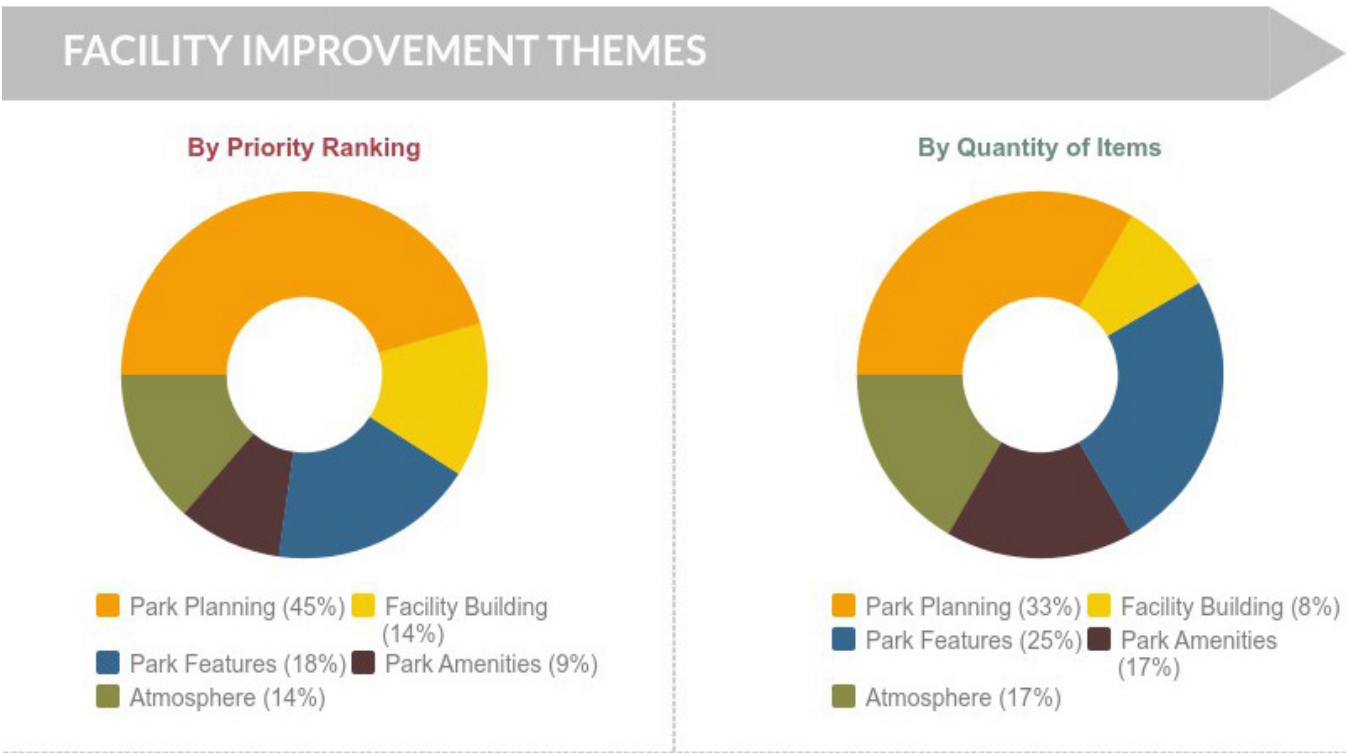
PROGRAMS

PRIORITIZATION THEMES

The identified priorities for the parks and recreation department can be clustered into three categories: park facilities, programs, and department management.

Facility Priorities

The facilities identified as a priority within each of the three public survey are: bikeways/trails, water access, and a community/senior center. The facilities identified as a priority by two surveys are connectivity, additional parks/ acquire land, a pool/ water park, and park maintenance. The facilities people identified as important on the surveys form themed clusters. People value park planning (bikeways/trails, connectivity, water access, additional parks/acquiring land), a type of facility (community/senior center), park features (rectangular fields, playgrounds, and pools/water parks), park amenities (bathrooms, and other amenities like picnic tables, trash cans, etc.), and the park’s atmosphere (maintenance and feeling of safety). Of these clusters, all of the park planning items and facility types appear as priorities in two or more surveys. Therefore, it is especially important that the Parks and Recreation Master Plan address park planning and construction of facilities.



Operational Management Priorities

Customer service was listed as a priority in two of the community surveys and advertising and school field scheduling were listed as priorities in one of the three surveys. As a category, the management of the Parks and Recreation department had the lowest immediacy rating, with no priorities ranking in all three surveys.



## PROGRAM PRIORITY RATING

### Program Priorities

Two of the priorities identified by the surveys fall under the theme of programs: special events and programs. Both of these were identified as priorities by two or more surveys, and programs was identified as a priority in all three surveys. With the heading of “programs” there are many sub-categories that were identified or mentioned in the three surveys, for example, teen programs, senior programs, and life skill classes. Based on the high priority ranking, the support and possible expansion of programs will need to be addressed in the Master Plan revisions, with additional attention paid to the type, availability, and location of programs. Conducting a program lifecycle analysis and cost recovery analysis will provide valuable information for crafting the master plan.

### Strengths of the Parks to Continue

It should be noted that several of the points identified as priorities also have high public satisfaction values. Being listed as a top priority does not mean a subject area is failing, just that people value it. The public lists several of the priorities as successes by the department. It is important then that the park system continue their high quality of service in these areas, and investigate if there are additional ways to meet the public’s need. For example, people surveyed said that they like the programs offered and that they want additional programs. The parks department can determine if programs are equally distributed throughout the county, minority groups like teens or seniors that need additional programs, or if program frequency should be increased. The following are public priorities that citizens have identified as currently being performed very highly: park maintenance, customer service, programs, and wildlife and natural areas

STRENGTHS OF THE PARKS  
AND RECREATION SYSTEM:

P A R K  
MAINTENANCE  
CUSTOMER  
SERVICE  
PROGRAMS  
WILDLIFE AND  
NATURE AREAS

# Facility Assessment

## PARK LAND

### Key Findings

- Chesterfield County has a diversity of total parkland
- Chesterfield County has a shortfall of regional parks
- Chesterfield County has an extreme shortfall of neighborhood and community parks
- The urbanizing areas of the County are suited to a new park type
- Improvements are required to existing parks
- Chesterfield County has a wide variety of special purpose parks

### Regional Parks

There are currently five regional parks in Chesterfield County, one of which, Irvin G. Horner Park, is undeveloped. Excluding the undeveloped park land (217 acres), the publicly accessible regional parkland is 634 acres, well below the stated 2017 target level of 1,360 acres. The target acreage is identified in the Comprehensive Plan and is based upon the Virginia Outdoors Plan standard of 4 acres/1,000 people. To meet this desired level of service, the County must develop Horner Park and add an additional 509 acres of land to the regional parks system.

The population is expected to grow over the next 20 years, rising from 340,000 in 2017 to 422,500 in 2040. To continue to provide the desired level of service, the County will need to add an additional 330 acres of regional parkland to the system during this time. Regional parks are 100 acres and larger, so this means an addition of 2-3 new regional parks.

Refer to Appendix A – Level of Service Analysis for complete inventory and level of service standards.

The County will also need to evaluate the location of regional parks to ensure that the population of the entire county is equitably served. The publicly available existing parks are clustered in the northern and eastern sections of the county, leaving the western and southern areas underserved. The County must also take into account future growth patterns when identifying locations for additional parks to ensure that the park system has the capacity to support the growing population of Chesterfield County. Refer to Appendix C for service area maps.

## Community Parks

There are 16 community park sites in Chesterfield County: 13 operated by the Parks and Recreation department and 4 school campuses that have dual function. Four of the parks, Atkins Acres Park, Lake Chesdin Park, Providence Road Park, and Magnolia Green Park have not yet been developed, so their combined acreage (308 acres) is not counted towards the total park acreage available for public use. The school acreage is counted at 47% for elementary schools and 42% for middle and high schools to account for the time when school is in session and the campus is unavailable for public use. The total community park acreage available for public use is 542 acres. The 2017 target amount is 1,020 acres. This is a shortfall of 726 acres. The need for additional community parks as identified in this level of service analysis is supported by the public's demand for additional community parks. The target acreage is identified in the Comprehensive Plan and is based upon the Virginia Outdoors Plan standard of 3 acres/1,000 people. Refer to Appendix A - Level of Service Analysis for complete inventory and level of service standards.

By enhancing the amenities at existing parks, the County may be able to meet part of the demand and equity of service for park types without acquiring additional land. There is potential that portions of several special purpose parks, like James River Conservation Area, Cogbill Park, Falling Creek Linear Park, and River City Sportsplex, could be developed with appropriate amenities so that they would serve as community parks. This could add an additional 113 acres of community park area into the park system.

To meet the desired level of service, 1,020 acres, for 2017 the County must build out the four undeveloped parks and develop community park level amenities at the special purpose parks. The County's population is expected to grow to 422,500 people by 2040. To maintain the desired level of service, the County should have 1,268 acres by this date, which is an increase of 248 acres above the 2017 levels. Community parks are 21-99 acres in size, so this means that the County will need to add 3-12 new parks, depending on the size of parcels acquired.

The County will also need to evaluate the location of community parks to ensure that the population of the entire county is equitably served. The publicly available existing parks are clustered in the northern and eastern sections of the county north of Route 288 and along the I-95 corridor, leaving the western and southern areas underserved. The County must also take into account future growth patterns when identifying locations for additional parks to ensure that the park system has the capacity to support the growing population of Chesterfield County. Refer to Appendix C for service area maps.

## Neighborhood Parks

Chesterfield County has 18 neighborhood park sites. The Parks and Recreation Department operates seven of them as dedicated neighborhood parks, four of them are within special use areas, and seven of them are on the grounds of public schools. In total, there are 443 acres accessible of neighborhood parkland. The school parks are counted at 47% for elementary schools and 42% for middle and high schools to account for the time when school is in session and the campus is unavailable for public use.

The County's comprehensive plan recommends 2 acres/1,000 people for neighborhood parks, a standard established in the Virginia Outdoors Plan. By this standard, the County should have 680 acres of parkland available for public use, which means there is a shortfall of 237 acres. The need for additional neighborhood parks is also reflected in public surveys, in which respondents have identified an unmet need for small local parks. Refer to Appendix A - Level of Service Analysis for complete inventory and level of service standards.

This shortfall can be addressed by a combination of acquiring additional land, developing larger scaled or special use parks with neighborhood park amenities, and designing new schools to have dual function with partitions that allow public access to the school property during school hours while maintaining the security of students. Four special purpose parks, Robious Landing Park, Falling Creek Ironworks Park, Henricus Historical Park, and Historic Point of Rocks Park have been developed with neighborhood park level amenities, and a fifth, Kiwanis Park, could be developed as a neighborhood park.

Neighborhood parks are sized 5-20 acres, which means that the County will need to add 12-47 new neighborhood parks if they were to address the current shortfall only with additional land. The County should also be planning for future parks as the County's population continues to grow and development expands. The population is expected to grow from 340,000 in 2017 to 422,500 in 2040, which would necessitate an addition of 165 acres of neighborhood parkland over this time period. This means the County would need to add 8-33 new parks in addition to the parks needed to meet the needs of the current population. Refer to Appendix C for maps of proposed parks and service areas.

## Urban Parks

There are currently no publicly operated urban parks in Chesterfield County, though high-density development in the County is generating settings where these parks are suitable. Urban parks are small in size, typically 0.5-5 acres, and are located in high density areas where sufficient park acreage is difficult to acquire. Because the parks are in high-traffic areas, they are intended to serve a wider range of users than the other types of parks in the County. Users may include pedestrians in commercial areas, office workers in surrounding buildings, special event attendees, and residents of nearby communities. Therefore, the design of each park should be specific to that site, context, and planned use. There is not yet a precedent for urban park design in the County, though the Comprehensive Plan does outline general guidelines that must be followed. The County may want to assemble a set of best practices or develop a demonstration park that follows best practices and can be referred to when other parks are designed.

## Special Purpose Parks

Chesterfield County operates 30 special purpose parks, eight of which are undeveloped. Excepting the 195 acres dedicated to neighborhood or community park use, the total area of these parks is 2,572 acres, 1,604 acres of which is publicly available. These parks center around unique environmental, cultural, or historical features. The amenities installed at each site should be customized to the needs and functions of that particular park. It may be that the type of amenities installed at the park and its proximity to residential areas allow it to function as a neighborhood or community style park as well. There is no standard for park number per population level or standard service area radius for special use parks. Rather, these parks serve to highlight and make publicly available a unique feature within the County.

## Findings - Park Land

- **Chesterfield County has a diversity of total parkland**

There are approximately 4,900 acres of parkland in the Chesterfield Parks system, either directly owned, leased, or in partnership. This corresponds to 14.4 acres/1,000 people, which is well above the minimum level of 9 acres/1,000 people recommended in the Virginia Outdoors Plan. Excluding the undeveloped or controlled access parkland, approximately 3,200 acres are available for public use, which corresponds to 9.5 acres/1,000 people, which is still greater than the state recommended minimum. This surplus is valuable because it means that the County controls enough land to provide quality recreation for citizens even as the population increases over the following decades. However, the County needs to ensure at a finer level of detail that it is providing the appropriate types of parks in equitable locations.

- **Chesterfield County has a shortfall of regional parks**

To meet the level of service identified in the Comprehensive Plan, the County needs to acquire and/or develop 726 acres of additional regional parkland. This represents building out the undeveloped Irvin G. Horner Park and purchasing and developing three additional regional parks. The parks should be located to provide for underserved areas of the county, particularly the western areas where residential density is expected to grow in the future.

- **Chesterfield County has an extreme shortfall of neighborhood and community parks**

Based on the level of service identified in the County Comprehensive Plan, the County has about two-thirds the acreage of neighborhood parks and half the acreage of community parks as what is needed. The County can resolve this shortfall by building out undeveloped parks, installing community or neighborhood level amenities at a larger scale park or special purpose park, continuing partnerships with schools to develop campuses as dual-purpose parks, and acquiring and developing additional parkland. As well as meeting requirement for total acreage, the County should also ensure that the parks equitably distributed throughout the County. The western and southern areas are particularly underserved, though there are residential pockets throughout the County that have limited access to parks.

- **The urbanizing areas of the County are suited to a new park type**

As Chesterfield County continues to build urban pockets of high density and mixed-use infill, the character of these areas necessitates a different style of park than currently exists within the parks and recreation system. Urban parks will be smaller and more specialized to meet the specific requirement of the surrounding area and diverse user group. The County should investigate developing a best practices guidebook or demonstration park as a reference for future development.

- **Improvements required to existing parks**

Establishing a diverse set of parks is the first step in creating a quality park system. The second, and ongoing step is to maintain those parks at a high level of service. There is a need for improved lighting and improved security at many of the existing park facilities within the system. Similarly, there are insufficient permanent restroom facilities in the parks to meet public demand. Parking should be included in the initial construction phase for any new park facility to provide the public with ample room for parking. As the diversity of Chesterfield County increases, there is a need for more consistent multi-lingual signage. These are general deficiencies observed by the Department. In order to specifically address the needs of each park, the Department must conduct a parks inventory and assessment survey.

- **Chesterfield County has a wide variety of special purpose parks**

The Parks and Recreation system includes a wide range of parks beyond the standard neighborhood, community, and regional parks. The County operates historic sites, cultural resources, and conservation areas. This diversity attracts residents and visitors to the County, but places special requirements for maintenance, operation, and development restrictions on the County. The primary purpose of historic, cultural, and conservation sites is the preservation of those valuable resources, and any development or improvement of those sites must be compatible with the site. Special purpose parks celebrate unique resources within the County, but their development potential is limited.

## ATHLETIC FIELDS

### Key Findings

- Rectangular Fields: Additional capacity needed to meet current demand
- Diamond Fields: Increase flexibility of fields to meet current demand
- Need for complete sports tournament facilities
- Need for increased maintenance of athletic facilities

There are currently 74 rectangular fields at county park and school sites that meet the standards for co-sponsored group use, 26 of which are football fields. Of the remaining 48 fields, 19 are lighted. There are other rectangular fields that could be added to the schedule roster if they receive turf and support facility improvements. There are 66 ball fields that meet the standards for rentable fields, 10 of which are lighted.

River City Sportsplex, located at Genito Road and Route 288, is comprised of 12 synthetic turf rectangular fields. This facility, along with Clover Hill Athletic Complex, host several national events such as the Champion Cup and Capital Cup lacrosse tournaments. In fiscal year 16, sports tourism brought in around \$37.7 million in economic impact to the county. The 7 rectangular fields at Clover Hill Athletic Complex are primarily utilized for tournaments.

Private resources include Ukrop Park, offering two synthetic turf fields and five grass fields, and Hensley Park with nine grass fields. These facilities are owned and operated the Richmond Kickers Youth Soccer Club. While the Parks and Recreation Department has no scheduling ability at these sites, the facilities are important resources for the county and assist in addressing local recreational demand and help make Chesterfield a sports tourism destination.

### Field Assignments - The AP System

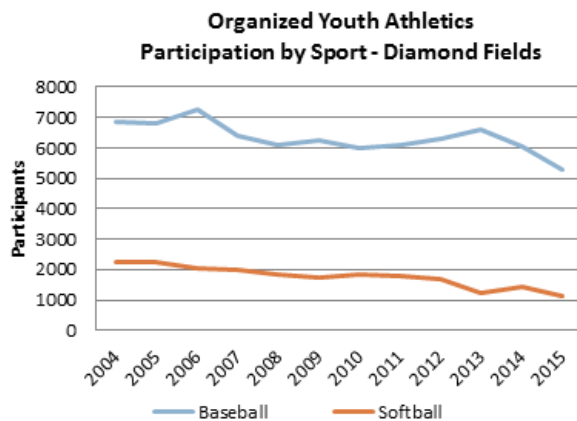
Field assignments for co-sponsored groups are handled through the Activity Period (AP) system, where leagues are provided a certain number of field use slots depending on their roster totals. AP availability is derived from the amount of time each field is available for use. A lighted rectangular field, for example, has about two times more use capacity than an unlighted field, and thus generates two times the AP. Weeknight practice time demand is the main driving factor for facility needs. For soccer, lacrosse, field hockey, baseball and softball this demand is determined through review of AP system data. For football, there are other driving factors that influence field needs, like the total number of teams.

### Organized Youth Athletics – Rectangular Fields

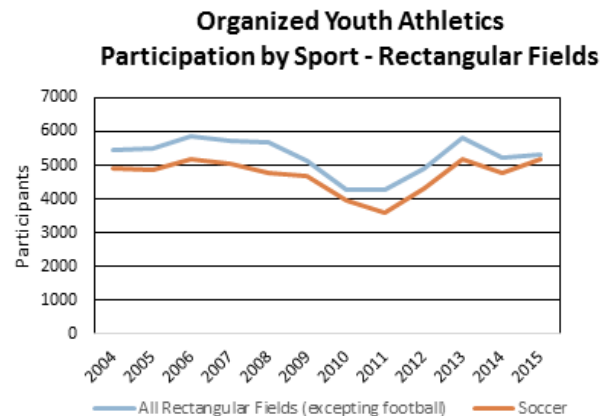
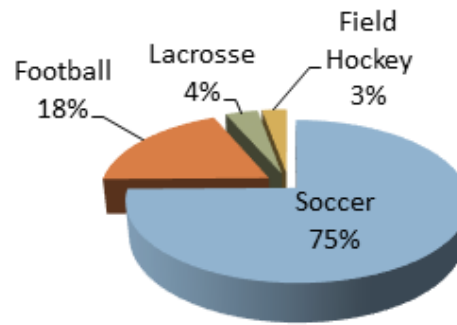
Youth soccer accounts for the greatest use of rectangular fields in the county with over 5,000 participants in the Fall of 2015. Participation in youth football programs totaled roughly 2,700 for the same time period, and substantially lower participation in lacrosse and field hockey. Participation numbers in these sports have remained generally flat over the past 10 years, with a slight increase in soccer and decrease in football participants. There was a dip in participation levels in all sports after the 2008 recession, but participation levels have since recovered.

## Organized Youth Athletics – Diamond Fields

Youth baseball accounts for the majority of diamond field use, with roughly 5,300 participants in 2015 compared to about 1,200 for softball. There has been a decline in the number of baseball and softball participants over the past 10 years.



**Organized Youth Athletics  
2015 Participation by Sport - Rectangular Fields**



## Other Uses

In addition to organized youth athletics, there are other significant factors influencing field demand:

- **Tournament use:** Tournaments account for a significant portion of weekend use of fields. This use is handled through the field reservation system. Facilities for sports tournaments differ from those for general recreation. Traditionally, parks were built with one field for each sport; sports tournaments require several fields accommodating one sport. River City Sportsplex and Clover Hill Athletic Complex were constructed to host tournaments and contain many fields of the same type.
- **Adult non-cosponsored group use:** There are many adult groups that reserve fields on weeknights and weekends for play.
- **Youth non-cosponsored group use:** There has been a recent increase in the number of youth groups under the Amateur Athletic Union(AAU) umbrella which are not cosponsored and are therefore not assigned field use through the AP system. This has resulted in an increase in field reservation demand.
- **Unstructured use:** There is an increasing demand for open space available to the community for informal play.

Due to heavy utilization of rectangular fields for cosponsored group practice, there are few resources remaining to adequately accommodate these other uses. For diamond fields, the decline in participation in youth programs has been largely matched by an increase in field reservations for tournaments and non- cosponsored group use.

## Findings - Athletic Fields

- **Rectangular Fields: Additional capacity needed to meet current demand**

Review of AP system data indicates a current need for 15 additional AP, or one new un-lighted field, in order to meet current practice time standards for soccer. Review of field rental indicates that an additional four lighted fields are required to meet demand. This totals to a current need of the equivalency of nine un-lighted soccer fields. For football, a home field is needed for each group in order to meet level of service standards. Currently there is a shortfall of four fields based on the number of football groups. This may be due to the existing fields being located in areas away from concentrated demand. Review of rectangular field reservation data, along with site observations, indicates a demand for adult group use and unstructured use. The shortfall is compounded by the field scheduling software the department currently uses, which does not efficient in scheduling resources.

- **Diamond Fields: Increase flexibility of fields to meet current demand**

Review of AP system data indicates that practice time standards for baseball and softball are currently being met. Review of diamond field reservation data indicates that demand for tournament and adult group use is being met with current facilities, but demand in this area is growing. Some football groups are utilizing diamond outfields for practice spaces. If additional rectangular fields are provided to accommodate these groups, capacity would be added to help meet future demands for diamond fields. The demand by different sports teams for diamond fields can be accommodated within one facility by installing portable pitching mounds. This means that the field can be used for either baseball

or softball with multiple base distances, and a variety of needs can be met with a single field. Additional fields may also be required to meet the demand of rental groups outside of the AP measurement method, especially in the western part of the County.

- **Need for complete sports tournament facilities**

The County is building its brand as a sports tournament destination, but lacks the full set of amenities required. Chesterfield County needs to provide additional parks with multiples of the same type of field in order to create a density of sports tournament facilities. Surrounding counties are also marketing themselves as sports tournament destinations, so Chesterfield County may wish to market to the needs of smaller tournaments to avoid competition. Co-sponsored sports teams are dropping in participation, so existing athletic facilities can be upgraded and made flexible, like with movable mounds and multi-field striping, in order to provide this infrastructure. The facilities can be marketed to smaller and more localized tournaments. The County also lacks rectangular and ball diamond stadium facilities for playoff games. Acquiring these facilities will allow the County to offer a more complete package when marketing for sports tournaments.

- **Increase maintenance of athletic facilities**

The County has invested resources into building destination quality sports fields and tournament complexes and must devote sufficient funding towards the maintenance and upkeep of these facilities to keep the fields in rentable condition. Increasing the flexibility of fields through movable mounds and multi-field striping will mean higher use levels and increased wear and tear. Funding and maintenance schedules must be allocated to keep them in playable condition for the public.

## COURT GAMES

### Key Findings

- Rising interest in pickleball and reduced interest in tennis
- Static interest in handball, basketball, and volleyball

### Tennis, Pickleball, and Handball

The popularity of tennis is gradually dropping, and the current inventory of courts is in surplus to the level of demand. Pickleball, a racket sport similar to tennis but played at lower speeds, is rising in popularity among all age groups, but especially older active adults. This is significant for the County, because the total and percentage of older adults is expected to increase over time. Though its popularity is rising, it is still a peripheral sport and the County should be cautious about committing resources to a sport that may hold interest only temporarily. The City could restripe some of the surplus tennis courts for dual use of tennis and pickleball, which would meet rising demand, but still leave resources flexible. Pickleball is a social sport, so the development of any dedicated courts should be constructed as a cluster of 6-8 courts. The double striping of tennis and pickleball courts may be done at dispersed locations. The public has no additional demand for handball or racquetball, so the two courts operated by the County meets demand.



Popularity of pickleball is rising among all age groups

### Basketball

The popularity of basketball is dropping both nationally and locally, but at both scales it is still by far the most popular sport. The County should continue to support and maintain basketball courts, especially as part of urban, neighborhood, and community parks. There was limited demand for additional courts in the public surveys, which will be addressed with the construction of five additional courts. These courts may be one of the amenities at a newly developed park, rather than be added to any existing parks. Consideration should be given to providing lighting at existing and new facilities to increase the amount of time such courts are available for use. The availability of and demand for indoor basketball courts will be addressed separately.

### Volleyball

Outdoor volleyball has limited popularity as a sport, so the County's inventory of 21 courts is close to the 2017 target of 23. Only two of the volleyball courts, those located in Harry G. Daniel Park, are developed to league quality standards. The County should consider developing two additional league-quality volleyball courts in this park. Most of the volleyball courts in the county are located near rentable picnic shelters to serve as part of the casual recreation experience.

## Findings - Court Games

- **Rising interest in pickleball and reduced interest in tennis**

Pickleball is a sport similar to tennis, but more physically accessible, and has been rising quickly in popularity, especially among active older adults. The percentage of those over 55 is expected to increase to total over one third of the population of the county by 2040, so the County should investigate developing more pickleball courts. The County should be cautious about expending resources on a sport that may have temporary interest, and so should combine the creation of dedicated pickleball courts with dual striping existing tennis courts for both sports. Interest in tennis has been in steady decline, so the conversion of some tennis facilities to pickleball will not constrict supply relative to public demand.

- **Static interest in handball, basketball, and volleyball**

Most court sports are dropping in popularity, but interest in them remains high enough that the County should continue maintaining existing facilities. New courts should be added to address specialized needs, like constructing two additional league-quality volleyball courts to diversify the type of court offered. Based on target levels of service for 2017, five additional basketball courts should be constructed. They may be placed within newly constructed parks, rather than added to an existing park.

## TRAILS

### Key Findings

- Need for trail connectivity
- Need for a variety of trail types within parks
- Partner with regional organizations to promote trail networks

Chesterfield County is committed to providing trails for recreation. The County has trails for hiking, equestrians, and bicyclists. The Department currently operates 28 miles of trails of 7' width or greater, and 13 miles of trails of 6' width or less. Hiking and multi-use trails are integrated into existing parks like at Dutch Gap Conservation Area, but are also the defining element of special use parks like Chester Linear Park. Some of these trails are looping trails within park boundaries, and others are linear connecting trails. The trail systems are fairly short in length, with half of the park's trail totaling a mile or less in length. The County operates no designated equestrian or mountain biking trails. Demand for additional trails is very high, especially as a means of connectivity. Trails offer an opportunity to create greenways, preserve open space, and protect sensitive environmental corridors along rivers and wildlife habitats.

The Department has partnered with private and non-profit organizations to build and enhance trail amenities in the County. The Department teamed with the Salisbury Garden Club to create 0.5-mile Tree Identification Trail at Robious Landing Park and joined with the Pocahontas Chapter of the Virginia Master Naturalists to construct 1.25 miles of new trails at Radcliffe Conservation Area. Joining with local groups for trail construction, enhancement, and maintenance multiplies the ability of the County to meet the public's demand for trails.

The County can also support trail development by partnering with regional organizations to support regional trail development. The East Coast Greenway, a developing 3,000 mile trail system connecting major cities in a continuous route from Canada to Key West, identifies approximately 30 miles of an on- and off-road bike route through Chesterfield County. In a separate project, the non-profit Friends of the Lower Appomattox River (FOLAR) has developed a masterplan for a multi-use trail that would extend approximately 23 miles along the Appomattox River and pass through Chesterfield County as well as two additional counties and three cities. The development of a strong internal trails system and cooperation with regional trail systems that pass through the County will establish Chesterfield County as a quality tourist destination for those looking to access many types of trails from one central location. Bolstering trails as a positive defining characteristic of Chesterfield County will attract new residents looking for an active lifestyle and tourists from the area and eastern seaboard looking for an adventure in a beautiful place.

## Findings - Trails

- **Need for trails for connectivity**

The County's commitment in the Comprehensive Plan to create alternative transportation routes within the County matches the public's high demand for increased off-road connections between residential areas, commercial areas, parks, and destination points like schools. Parks and Recreation currently operates several linear trails, and ensure that there are trail connections to the boundaries of park property.

- **Need for a variety of trail types within parks**

There is a need in the County for additional hiking and purely recreational trails, as identified in the needs analysis and by public demand. The County should provide a range of trail types and accessibility levels so that users can choose their experiences. These trails would be looping trails within a park, and while may connect with a linear multi-use path, their primary purpose is recreational. To provide distributed access to trails, each park should have some type of trail.

- **Partner with regional organizations to promote trail networks**

There are many regional organizations planning trail networks that pass through Chesterfield County, including the East Coast Greenway bike route and the FOLAR Appomattox River Trail. By partnering with and supporting the efforts of these and other organizations the County can expand its trail network with abbreviated effort.

## WATER ACCESS

### Key Findings

- Need for additional ramps for motorized boats
- Need for additional non-powered boat launches
- Pair fishing access with boat launch sites

Chesterfield is bordered by two major rivers, the Appomattox and the James, abuts Lake Chesdin, and encompasses Swift Creek Reservoir. The County has limited public access to the water in proportion to the amount of waterfront. There is only one park with a powered-boat ramp, Dutch Gap Conservation area which has a double ramp onto the James River. This site receives heavy use and is overcrowded. There are non-powered boat launches (canoe/kayak) at sites along the James River at Robious Landing Park, on Lake Chesdin at the Lake Chesdin Boat Landing, and on the Appomattox River at Radcliffe Conservation Area. Fishing access is available at each of these boat access sites. There is no public fishing or boating access to Swift Creek Reservoir. The number and type of water access is very low in the County not just compared to the population count and public demand, but also based on the amount of waterfront available to the County.

## Findings - Water Access

- **Need for additional ramps for motorized boats**

The County is surrounded by and includes many deep water bodies, like the James River and Lake Chesdin, but only one park, Dutch Gap Conservation Area, has powered-boat ramps. These ramps are overcrowded and do not provide full access to a defining feature of Chesterfield County: the abundance of waterfront. Additional powered boat launches are needed in the County, and should be sited to provide access to a different area of water than can be accessed by the Dutch Gap Conservation Area launch.

- **Need for additional non-powered boat launches**

There are currently three non-powered boat launches distributed around the County, which is an inadequate number based on the amount of waterfront and public demand. The County should construct additional non-powered boat launches to access water bodies not currently accessible or with limited accessibility. These include but are not limited to the Upper Appomattox River, the James River, and Swift Creek Conservation Area. The County should consider placement of launch sites to facilitate blueway paddle trails that can be explored with the assistance of shuttle parking.

- **Pair fishing access with boat launch sites**

As well as boat access points, the County also has a shortage of developed fishing access sites. Designated fishing sites are usually available at boat launch sites, so as the County develops additional boat launch sites, they number of fishing sites will rise to meet the public demand.

## PLAYGROUNDS

### Key Findings

- Current need for playgrounds may taper off
- Limited diversity of existing play spaces

While there is currently no data available on number of playground visitors, it is evident through observations and public input that playgrounds are valuable and in high demand. There are 13 park sites with playground equipment along with 38 elementary schools, which also serve as community recreational resources while school is not in session. In total, there are 56 playgrounds available in the County. The County will need to build additional playgrounds to meet current and future demand, but the pace of playground construction will slow approaching 2040, to account for the projected decrease in youth population in the County.

There is limited diversity of the type of playground offered in the County, most playgrounds providing standard post-and-deck equipment for ages 2-12. Public interest is expanding from this playground style to encompass other types of play equipment that is less “equipment” dependent, like earthworks and nature play; diversity of ages, like with outdoor exercise equipment; and inclusivity of play, with universally accessible equipment and play features.

### Findings - Playgrounds

- **Current need for playgrounds may taper off**

The public is demanding more playgrounds, but this demand will slow as the projected percentage and total number of youth in the County decreases by 2040. The County should build additional playgrounds to meet current demand.

- **Limited diversity of existing play spaces**

Public interest is expanding to include new styles and arrangement of play spaces, and the County has limited diversity of playgrounds to meet this demand. Expanding the diversity of play spaces offered within the County system would create destination parks and serve a wider user group of all ages and abilities.



## PICNIC SHELTERS

### Key Findings

- Some areas of the County are underserved by picnic shelters
- The location of the shelter within the park is key
- Lack of enclosed picnic pavilions
- Lack of large picnic pavilions

There are 30 picnic shelters in the County park system, 22 of which are available for rental. These shelters typically accommodate up to 75 people and feature grills, picnic tables, horseshoe pits and/or volleyball areas. The department has seen an increase in shelter use throughout the years, possibly in part due to increasing population and very little increase in number of facilities. It is evident through review of shelter reservation data that certain shelters receive much more use than others. All County-operated shelters are open-sided, which limits their use and rental capacity. Most shelters accommodate 75 people, which limits the ability of events and reunions, which typically include 150 or more people, to be held in the County parks.

### Findings - Picnic Shelters

- **Some areas of the county are underserved by picnic shelters**

There are populated areas of the county without convenient access to shelter rental sites, mainly west of Rt 288 in the Hull Street Road and Genito Road areas.

- **The location of the shelter within the park is key**

Shelters located centrally near playgrounds, restrooms, parking lots, and other park amenities receive significantly more use than those located in more secluded or periphery locations.

- **Lack of enclosed picnic pavilions**

All of the shelters in the County are open-sided, which limits their season of use and rental. Building enclosed pavilions will increase the diversity of offerings within the park system.

- **Lack of large picnic pavilions**

The park system lacks a adequate number of large picnic shelters accommodating 150 or more people, which would be suitable for events and reunions. Offering this size shelter at a centrally located park would provide a resource to the public and an rental opportunity for the County.

## HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION

### Key Findings

- Historic sites are an important tourism resources
- Historic sites are an important educational resource
- Historic sites require additional maintenance resources
- The variety and quantity of historic sites is an asset to the County

Chesterfield County manages 14 interpretive historical sites. They include colonial sites like Henricus Historical Park, which includes a re-creation of the 1611 Citie of Henricus, site of the second successful English settlement in the New World; Civil War battle sites like Fort Stevens and Fort Wead, industrial sites like Falling Creek Ironworks Park and Mid-Lothian Coal Mines Park; and historical buildings like Castlewood, Magnolia Grange, and Eppington Plantation.

The density and diversity of these historic sites are a valuable asset to County tourism in aggregation as well as individually. Some of these facilities are destination-quality, like the Henricus Historical Park which offers unique educational venues and entertainment not normally found at the local level.

When considering the maintenance cycle of park facilities, the unique construction of historic sites requires renovations and replacement at a higher cost and with more frequency than other park facilities.

### Findings - Historical Interpretation

- **Historic Sites are an important tourism resource**

The density, variety, and quality of interpretive historic sites draws tourists to the County. The County should continue investing in and marketing its historic sites.

- **Historic sites are an important educational resource**

The interpretive programs and development at the historical sites offer an important educational resource to students and visitors in the County and surrounding region.

- **Historic sites require additional maintenance resources**

The unique construction of historic sites requires renovations and replacement at a higher cost and with more frequency than other park facilities. Adequate maintenance resources must be allocated to accommodate this need.

- **Variety and quantity of historical sites is an asset to the County**

The quantity, diversity, and quality of the historic sites in the County contributes to the character of Chesterfield County, making it a desirable place to live, play, and visit.

## NATURE OBSERVATION AND INTERPRETATION

### Key Findings

- The County has preserved contiguous natural areas
- The County encompasses two distinct geologic regions but only has one nature center

Chesterfield County manages five conservation areas: Dutch Gap Conservation Area, James River Conservation Area, and Brown and Williamson Conservation Area along the James River, and Radcliffe Conservation Area and Swift Creek Conservation Area along the Appomattox River. The James River Conservation Area, the Swift Creek Conservation Area, and the Brown and Williamson Conservation Area are undeveloped and available by appointment only. The other two conservation areas combined offer 897 acres of woodlands, swampland, and water for visitors to explore on trails, boardwalks, and paddle trails. A diverse assortment of guided programs and activities are held at both conservation sites.

Several of the other parks within the County system have conservation easements within a section of the park that limits development. This means that the County has a distributed array of environmental preservation areas to supplement the larger resources of the dedicated conservation areas. For example, Adkins Acres Park is an undeveloped community park that has conservation easements along its river frontage. These easements will restrict the development of the park, but will also create a unique amenity for visitors to this community level park.

Rockwood Nature Center at Rockwood Park is the only county-operated nature center in Chesterfield County. It offers nature programs and group activities for all ages, and is open daily for walk-in visitors to explore the exhibits and speak to naturalists.

Chesterfield County encompasses two geologic regions: the Piedmont, which is characterized by rolling hills and upland hardwood forests, and the Coastal Plain, which is characterized by flat topography and many water bodies. Rockwood Nature Center showcases the Piedmont ecology, but Chesterfield County lacks a nature center to interpret the ecology of the Coastal Plain. The County may wish to explore the creation of an additional nature center, it should be located in an environment typical of the Coastal Plain and with surroundings compatible with interpretation programs.

## Findings - Nature Observation and Interpretation

- **The County has preserved contiguous natural areas**

Chesterfield County manages five conservation areas totaling approximately 1,725 acres, more than a third of the County's park land. These conservation areas are a valuable resource for programming and recreation, as well as providing important ecological functions. Three of the conservation areas are undeveloped, giving Chesterfield County the space to expand recreational amenities and programming to meet future levels of demand. However, the sensitivity of the ecological resources, development restrictions based on legal conservation easements, and the varying geology of the land means that development potential of these sites is extremely limited.

- **The County encompasses two distinct geologic regions, but only has one nature center**

Chesterfield County encompasses two distinct geologic regions, the Piedmont and the Coastal Plain. The existing Rockwood Nature Center interprets the Piedmont Region. An additional nature center located in and interpreting the Coastal Plain would be a valuable educational asset for the County.

## OPEN PLAY FIELDS

### Key Findings

- Need for designated open play fields

Open-play non-athletic playing fields are generally not in the park system. Athletic fields maintained at a level III status are designated as open play fields and general practice space, but these resources are limited. There is an increasing public demand for spaces open to unstructured play. An open play field does not need to be sized or striped for any sport, but should be level, well-drained, and large enough to accommodate a variety of pickup games. The County should incorporate an open play space into all new parks and should investigate how to install an open play space into existing parks.

## Findings - Open Play Fields

- **Need for designated open play fields**

The County does not currently operate designated open play fields but there is a rising demand for them for unstructured play and pickup games. The County should develop a standard for open play field creation and management, and construct additional open play fields throughout the park system.

## OTHER ACTIVITIES

### Key Findings

- Special sports facilities (disc golf and archery) are unevenly geographically distributed
- Demand for additional dog parks

The County manages one disc golf course and one archery range. The demand for additional facilities of these types is currently low, but participation in and number of programs is steadily increasing, particularly for archery. An additional facility of each type would increase the accessibility of the facilities to the entire county. An additional archery range is planned at Horner Park, and will serve the western portion of the County, balancing the existing range at Rockwood Park, in the central area of the County. The existing disc golf course is located at Goyne Park, so an additional course in the central or western portion of the County may be beneficial to add facility diversity and attract younger park users.

The County currently operates one dog park at Rockwood Park and is constructing a second one at Goyne Park. The Rockwood facility is heavily used and high public demand for additional dog parks indicates that additional parks be constructed. Additional dog parks should be located for convenient geographical access.

### Findings -Other Activities

- **Specialized sports facilities are unevenly geographically distributed**

The County currently operates one disc golf course and one archery range. Participation, especially within archery programs, is steadily increasing. This is a specialized service that cannot be met anywhere else in the county, so the Department must support this growth with additional facilities. The current facilities are not centrally located, so an additional disc golf course and archery range in the areas of the county currently underserved by the respective amenities should be installed. The new facilities should be markedly different from the existing facilities, to provide diversity and potentially attract new users.

- **Demand for additional dog parks**

The one public dog park at Rockwood Park is heavily used and high public demand for additional dog parks indicates that the additional dog park planned at Goyne Park will not be adequate to meet demand. Therefore, the department should develop additional dog parks to equitably serve the entire geographical area of the County.

## INDOOR FACILITIES

### Key Findings

- Areas of the County are underserved by community centers
- Uneven distribution of gymnasiums compared to youth population
- Need for an equitable shared-use agreement between Parks and Recreation and Chesterfield County Public Schools
- Need for a facility to hold 10-week summer camp programs

The County provides indoor programming space through an array of sources. The County holds programs at County-owned facilities and community centers, has a shared-use agreement with the public schools for gym space and summer programs, and leases programming space from churches. A minority of the indoor space used by the County is controlled by the County. Of the 231,600 sf of space used by the Parks and Recreation Department 216,600 sf, or 93%, of it is owned or controlled by an outside group. Outside ownership limits the County's ability to schedule the space and modify it to fit programming needs. As well as limitations to the County's control of indoor facilities, the County also has a shortfall of total indoor facility space. The Virginia Outdoors Plan recommends indoor facilities at a level of 0.75 sf/person. The County currently provides 0.68 sf/person, a deficit of approximately 24,000 sf. Refer to Appendix A - Level of Service Analysis for details on the inventory and level of service standards for indoor recreation space.

### Community Centers

The County operates two 5,000 sf community centers, the Bensley Community Building in Bensley Park and the Mayes-Colbert Ettrick Community Building in Ettrick Park, and a third 5,000 sf community center is currently under construction in Stonebridge. The amenities in each facility include a warming kitchen, meeting room, game room, and multipurpose rooms. Programs held include classes, workshops, fitness programs, and special events, and the facilities are available for rent. The Stonebridge Center is within the same complex as the Richmond Volleyball Club's facility (RVC), and the County will have shared access to RVC's indoor volleyball courts. The three community centers are in the south and northeastern areas of the county, leaving much of the County under served, a finding that is reflected in the public survey results. The size of the community centers also limits the type of facilities that can be offered there. The existing facilities function

as community centers, rather than as recreation centers, and would need to be expanded in order to offer amenities such a fitness center, basketball court, or indoor walking track. There is a high demand for additional indoor recreation centers. The County does not currently operate any indoor athletic or recreation areas, so the development of such a center would allow the County greater control over scheduling of indoor activities. In addition, the County may wish to augment existing community centers by adding indoor gyms to the facilities.

### **Shared Use School Facilities - Sports**

Chesterfield County co-sponsors four youth basketball leagues with a total of 6,000 players and is able to schedule practices and games in elementary and middle school gyms. The public school system is responsible for the allocation of space, and the Department collaborates with them. There is an adequate number of gym spaces available, but they are unevenly distributed among population centers, which results in longer travel times. Chesterfield's population will continue to grow, though the percentage and total of youths will drop off in the near future. When planning for future play space, the Department should collaborate with the public school system to expand school gymnasiums where youth population percentage is high, but also ensure that school gym space reflects the adult population's demand for gymnasium space. There is a need for increased communication and cooperation between the Department and the County public school system to manage the shared-use of school gym space and park athletic facilities.

### **Shared Use School Facilities – Summer Programs**

Chesterfield County operates a summer camp program based out of 11 elementary school facilities. The County uses the gym, cafeteria, and classroom space to operate the summer program. The length of the summer program is limited by the time the Department is permitted to use the school space, which is a four-week period each summer. If the County owned indoor recreation facilities that could support summer youth programs, then the summer program could be extended to include more of the student's 10-week summer break.

### **Leased Facilities**

Chesterfield Parks and Recreation currently holds exercise classes and other older active adult programming at three churches: Huguenot Baptist Church, Chesterfield Baptist Church, and Episcopal Church of Our Savior. Once the Stonebridge Community Center opens, some of these programs may be relocated to that facility.

## Findings - Indoor Facilities

- **Areas of the County are underserved by community centers**

There are currently three community centers in the entire County, and their capabilities are limited by their limited square footage. The County requires additional community centers geographically distributed to serve the entire county. The size of the community centers restricts the type and scale of programs that can be held in them. The County should investigate developing indoor recreation centers up to 40,000sf that can accommodate fitness centers, gymnasiums, and other indoor recreation activities. Developing these spaces will give the County direct control over scheduling indoor spaces.

- **Uneven distribution of gymnasiums compared to youth population**

Chesterfield County co-sponsors four basketball leagues and schedules practices and games in school gymnasiums. However, the number teams in the northern half of the County is greater than the gym space available, resulting in longer travel times for practice throughout the County. When planning for future play space, the Department should collaborate with the public school system to expand school gymnasiums where youth population percentage is high, but also ensure that school gym space reflects the adult population's demand for gymnasium space and the provision of adult programming.

- **Need for an equitable shared-use agreement between Parks and Recreation and Chesterfield County Public Schools**

The school system is responsible for the allocation of gym space used for Department-sponsored programs, and the schools use park facilities for school-sponsored programs. The shared-use agreement between the two entities needs to be refined to provide for an equitable arrangement with clear channels of communication and collaboration.

- **Need for facility to hold 10-week summer camp program**

Chesterfield County currently hosts a summer camp program at public school facilities, but is limited to a four-week camp by scheduling limitations of the school. The County requires access to space that can accommodate a 10-week summer camp program, which would align with the student's school break period. The County might achieve this by leasing additional spaces, negotiating a modified shared-use agreement with the schools, or acquiring a County-owned facility that can support the needs of the summer camp program.

## OTHER COUNTY RECREATIONAL RESOURCES

### Key Findings

- State and Federal parks augment County amenities
- Public facilities are intended to complement private facilities

### State and Federal Parks

Pocahontas State Park is the largest state park in Virginia and is centrally located in Chesterfield County. The park was built by the CCC in the 1930s and is 8,115 acres with three lakes covering 256 acres. The park offers a diverse set of amenities, including boating, picnicking, camping cabins, 64-plus miles of hiking and mountain biking trails, and nature and history programs. Some of the amenities are only publicly available in this park. The park includes the only public aquatic center in the County, with a toddler pool, a splash park, and several recreational pools. The park also has a 2,000-seat amphitheater and many rentable picnic shelters. There is a small fee to access the park.

The Presquile National Wildlife Refuge is a 1,329 acres island refuge in the James River. The refuge was originally established in 1952 as a migratory bird refuge, but today also functions as a important wetland habitat and fish use area. Public access to the site is restricted to advance registration only, but the site provides an amenity to boaters on the James River and key part in supporting biodiversity and migratory patterns in the region.

The National Park Service operates two sites in Chesterfield County: Parker's Battery and Drewy's Bluff National Battlefield Park. Both are Civil War military sites with intact fortifications and interpretive walking trails.

Access to these state and federal park lands is limited due to user fees or required registration, but their presence in Chesterfield County gives citizens convenient access to additional resources and enhances the network of park and natural spaces in the County. The department hosts community recreation programs at these sites.

## Private Facilities

Aside from the wide range of parks and recreation activities offered by the Parks and Recreation Department, there is a growing number of private facilities county wide. These facilities offer very diverse types of recreational activities. From going to the gym, to golfing, to rock climbing, to karate, and many more, Chesterfield County residents have numerous private recreation options available to them.

Many of these businesses like American Family Fitness, Gold's Gym, Swim RVA, and the YMCA offer recreation facilities that may include pools, fitness and weight rooms, basketball courts, and fitness classes. These businesses all operate with the goal of creating healthy lifestyles for their members. Many neighborhood associations (Salisbury Country Club, Bon Air Community Center, Foxfire, etc.) across Chesterfield County offer some of these same recreational options to their residents. These can be integral in attracting new residents to the neighborhood and into Chesterfield. Unlike the county parks and recreation resources that are available to all residents at no cost, these private facilities are available to only those willing and able to pay monthly/usage fees. Despite this barrier to use, these facilities are valuable to Chesterfield County because they can attract residents to the county, generate tax revenue, and provide jobs.

## Findings - Other County Recreational Resources

- **State and Federal parks augment County amenities**

Chesterfield County contains several state and federal park or historical sites. Access to these state and federal park lands is limited due to user fees or required registration, but their presence in Chesterfield County gives citizens convenient access to additional resources and enhances the network of park and natural spaces in the County.

- **Public facilities are intended to complement private facilities**

Private facilities offer specialized programs and amenities, but have barriers to entry in terms of user fees or membership restrictions. Facilities and amenities offered by the County are intended to offer a standard level of service to all residents and to fill in the gaps of private facility offerings.

## FACILITY RENOVATION AND MAINTENANCE

### Key Findings

- Expect to replace/repair a higher than average number of park facilities within the next five years
- Delaying routine maintenance results in more costly replacement
- Investment in quality or innovative materials will save on future maintenance costs

The park system's current inventory, exclusive of land, is valued at \$190,000,000. A majority of the park system was constructed over 25 years ago. The typical lifecycle replacement is 20-30 years, which means that a larger percentage than average of repairs and replacement will need to be made within the next five years. Typically, approximately 2% of the aggregate value of the parks system needs renovation/replacement on an annualized basis. This represents \$3,800,000 per year. Annual maintenance funding has not reached this level for several years, so the recommended lifecycle repairs and renovations have not been made. Delaying major renovations and repairs compounds the degeneration of the facility, necessitating complete replacement rather than repair. Many of the County's athletic facilities were constructed in the 70s and 80s, which means that normal lifecycle repairs are clustered rather than evenly distributed through the 20-30 year lifecycle. This has produced a backlog of system replacements for athletic lighting and athletic fields and courts, especially for fencing. Chesterfield County has installed synthetic turf fields at some athletic sites. Renovation and replacement of synthetic turf comes at a higher cost than natural turf surfacing, and turf and safety pad require more frequent renovations.

### Findings - Renovation and Maintenance

- **Expect a higher than average number of replacements/repairs within the next five years**

A majority of the park system's equipment and facilities were built at the same time, and so key lifecycle repairs are synchronized. Within the next five years the County will be facing higher than average costs and time for equipment repair. Budget and personnel should be distributed in readiness.

- **Delaying routine maintenance results in more costly replacement**

When routine maintenance is deferred the amenity degrades to the point that it requires replacement rather than repair. This results in a higher total cost, even if there may have been short term savings by deferment. The department should budget for adequate funds and staffing to be able to fulfill the amenities' lifecycle maintenance schedule.

- **Investment in quality or innovative materials will save on future maintenance costs**

Different materials have different maintenance costs and lifecycles. Selecting a material with a higher initial cost but a lower lifetime cost may save money over time. New materials and construction solutions are constantly being developed and the department should keep abreast of these innovations and implement them where appropriate.

# Operations Assessment

Key Findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Satellite offices provide efficient service delivery</li><li>• Rising public expectations for maintenance</li><li>• High frequency of use leads to faster deterioration</li><li>• Rising expectations for maintenance at the public schools</li><li>• Maintenance staffing shortages and high turnover</li><li>• Park Maintenance standards are not being met on a consistent basis</li><li>• Park equipment has not been replaced per lifecycle standard</li><li>• Maintenance of athletic facilities has been reduced</li></ul>
--------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

The Park Operations Division provides comprehensive grounds maintenance services to all citizens and visitors to the County’s system of parks, schools, and libraries. External customers include athletic leagues, co-sponsored groups, and school organizations. In addition, the division provides services to internal customers including the Recreation Division, School System, County Administration, and Emergency Services. County Parks and Recreation staff performed an informal review and analysis of the Operations Division.

## MAINTENANCE TASKS

Park Operations provides maintenance and upkeep to 80 parks and facilities and 70 public schools around the County, totaling over 7,100 acres and 26,000 acres of mowed turf annually. The range of facilities the Department maintains is diverse, including 230 athletic fields, more than 12 acres of landscape beds, over 200 hard courts, 165 playgrounds, and 42 miles of trails. Core tasks include mowing and landscape maintenance, minor utility maintenance, litter pickup and park facility cleaning, athletic field marking, major repairs, and coordination with the school system during events. Secondary tasks include snow removal and assistance during Department-sponsored special events like the Fourth of July and the JRAC James River Clean-Up. There are 6.3 million park visitors annually and 630,000 users of the trail system annually. Maintenance must be performed to keep up with the wear and tear of heavy visitor use and continue the standard of excellence of Chesterfield’s parks’ appearance.

## SERVICE DELIVERY

The Department provides these services with 67 full-time and 16 part-time seasonal employees. Maintenance service operations are performed from seven satellite office/compounds located throughout the County. The Division works with co-sponsored athletic leagues providing baseball, softball, football, and soccer programs to coordinate volunteer grounds maintenance at their assigned sites and their special events and tournaments. The Division regularly works with Eagle Scouts, church, and other community services groups for special projects to enhance the park system.

## Findings - Operations

- **Park equipment has not been replaced per lifecycle standard**

As in facility renovations and replacements, maintenance equipment and work vehicle replacement has not met typical lifecycle replacement for park operations. Reduction of annual capital equipment budget by close to 50% since 2009.

- **Maintenance staffing shortage and turnovers**

Park maintenance operation staffing has been slow to recover from 2009 reductions in staff resources. This has affected the ability of work groups to deliver services that meet or exceed standards for maintenance. The Division's size has been reduced over the last 15 years. In 2002, the staff to park ratio was 1:1. The current staff ratio is 3/4:1. Low compensation and high workload demands has led to principal maintenance worker positions experiencing a 20% or greater annual turnover rate. The maintenance position also exhibits high levels of absenteeism due to stress of workload under constant short staff conditions. The shortage of staff and high-turn over rates results in a poorer quality of work being completed than meets the County's standards.

- **Rising public school expectations for maintenance**

The school system express an expectation for higher quality grounds maintenance. The Department is in continued discussions seeking to shorten mowing frequency. Work schedules and performance of tasks has been challenging at school sites due to long SOL testing periods, multiple events during work hours, and "pop-up" gardens and other PTA projects on grounds which restrict work times and fragment mowing and general grounds maintenance activities.

- **Park Maintenance standards are not being met on a consistent basis**

Staff shortages and a reduction in overall staff numbers results in the maintenance team focusing on the core responsibilities of grass mowing, litter control, restrooms, and athletic fields. These core activities have increased from 50% of the teams' effort to 75%. There are limited remaining resources for more detailed maintenance of general park areas. As a result, the parks are not consistently meeting maintenance standards.

- **High frequency of use leads to deterioration**

The overall condition of park sites, school grounds, athletic fields have deteriorated due to increase in use, and uniquely at school sites, with continuous temporary classroom relocations.

- **Satellite offices provide efficient service delivery**

The current system of satellite parks maintenance and operations works well to deliver effective and efficient service delivery. Work zone geography can be easily adjusted for changing sites and facility equity in work load. As the Department increases developed park acreage to meet demand, the location and staffing of satellite facilities will need to be adjusted accordingly.

- **Maintenance of athletic facilities has been reduced**

Game day maintenance of Class I, II, III athletic fields have been reduced. Support for adult athletics has been outsourced to outside parties. Grounds maintenance services have become more re-active than pro-active.

- **Rising public expectations for maintenance**

The level of facility maintenance has increased, as well as expectation for higher quality recreational facilities.

# SECTION IV - RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION

## Priorities

### FACILITIES

Chesterfield County enjoys an extensive and varied parks and open space system. Maintaining and improving this system should be a priority along with additions and enhancements to address current shortfalls in service. Repairs and improvements to the parks should be performed in order of priority, as defined below.

Based on the level of service evaluation and expressed needs of the citizens, the following are specific priority improvements:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Repair and improve existing amenities</li><li>• Construct additional trails and bikeways, focusing on linkages between existing trails, destinations, and residential areas. Support development of regional trail networks like the FOLAR Trail and the East Coast Greenway bike route.</li><li>• Develop additional neighborhood and community park sites in areas that are currently underserved</li><li>• Provide additional water access points including powered boat ramps, non-powered boat launches, and fishing access</li><li>• Provide public recreational aquatic facilities</li><li>• Construct additional playgrounds</li><li>• Construct distributed multi-generational community centers and centralized recreational center(s)</li></ul>	<div>Order of Repairs and Improvements</div> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. <i>Safety: tripping hazards, broken railings, standing water, broken play equipment, surfacing.</i></li><li>2. <i>Code: ADA, ingress/egress, lighting, fire</i></li><li>3. <i>Deferred Maintenance: paint, equipment repairs, etc.</i></li><li>4. <i>Obsolescence / Replacements: obsolete non-standard/ non code compliant amenities, features, etc.</i></li><li>5. <i>Park Improvements: additions which address programs, address current needs, add value etc.</i></li></ol>
----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

# PROGRAMS

A detailed assessment report needs to be developed to analyze current program offerings to ensure that the recreational programs are meeting current needs and planning for future needs. The Department should ensure that they:

- Prioritize and focus funds and staff resources on core programs
  - Eliminate programs which are declining to no more than 20% of the overall programming and introduce new programs each year.
- Align age targets of program offerings with current demographics and increase 55+ program offerings to better align with the aging demographic.
  - Focus cost recovery on non-core programs, achieving higher cost recovery on value-added.

# OPERATIONS

Chesterfield County has a vast and varied array of park sites, facilities, historical and environmental resources, and programs that it oversees. Efficiency in operation should be the department's overall goal. Specific priorities to reach this include:

- Track amenity and material lifecycles and perform scheduled maintenance
- Budget for lifecycle maintenance and improvements to keep existing facilities in peak condition
- Collaborate with other Departments to integrate operations and objectives
- Develop an environmental sustainability plan for the department

## Recommended System Wide Priorities

PROGRAMS	FACILITIES	OPERATIONS
core programs	repairs & improvements	track material/amenity lifecycles
tracking lifecycles	trail network expansion	plan budget for annual maintenance/replacement
health and wellness	aquatics	integrate objectives with other Departments
active adult programming	indoor recreation	sustainability
cost recovery	neighborhood parks and playgrounds	
marketing and promotion		

# Park Land

## ***Identified Concerns:***

- *Shortfall of neighborhood, community, and regional park acreage*
- *Uneven distribution of parkland throughout County*
- *High density development areas require a new type of park*

## **Equal Access to Neighborhood and Community Parks**

Chesterfield County has an extreme shortfall of neighborhood and community parks according to the target Level of Service identified in the County Comprehensive Plan, and needs to develop an additional 237 acres and 478 acres respectively to meet the needs of the population in 2017. The County has 285 acres of land set aside for development of community parks. It is recommended that the County move forward immediately on the development of these park sites while simultaneously working to acquire an additional 231 acres for neighborhood parks. Equity mapping showing the use zones of the parks overlaid onto population areas show that some areas of the county are underserved. Additional parks should be developed in these areas. See the figures on the next page and additional figures in Appendix C. Neighborhood and community parks should be developed to the level and with the amenities recommended in the Comprehensive Plan.

A larger classification of park (regional or community) can function as a smaller classification of park (community or neighborhood park) and a special use park as either as a neighborhood or community park if it has the amenities of those smaller park types and proximity to a residential area. By enhancing the amenities at existing parks, the County may be able to meet part of the demand and equity of service for park types without acquiring additional land.

- Build-out the undeveloped community parks in the County system: Atkins Acres Park, Lake Chesdin Park, and Providence Road Park (281 total acres)
- Pursue acquisition and development of 231 additional acres for neighborhood parks. Priority should be given to the sites identified as proposed park locations in the Comprehensive Plan.
- Work with developers to incorporate park space into new residential development and infill mixed-use projects. Require that park space meets the area's demands and adheres to standards of community/neighborhood/urban parks outlines in the County's Comp Plan.
- Consider the County's land use plan and when selecting sites for future community and neighborhood park development. Plan the locations to be in areas designated for future low and high residential density.
- Explore the potential of incorporating neighborhood and community park elements into existing special purpose and regional parks. This will expand park coverage and acreage totals without the need for land acquisition. For example, developing Robious Landing park as a community level park and Historic Point of Rocks Park as a neighborhood park will provide resources for currently underserved areas.

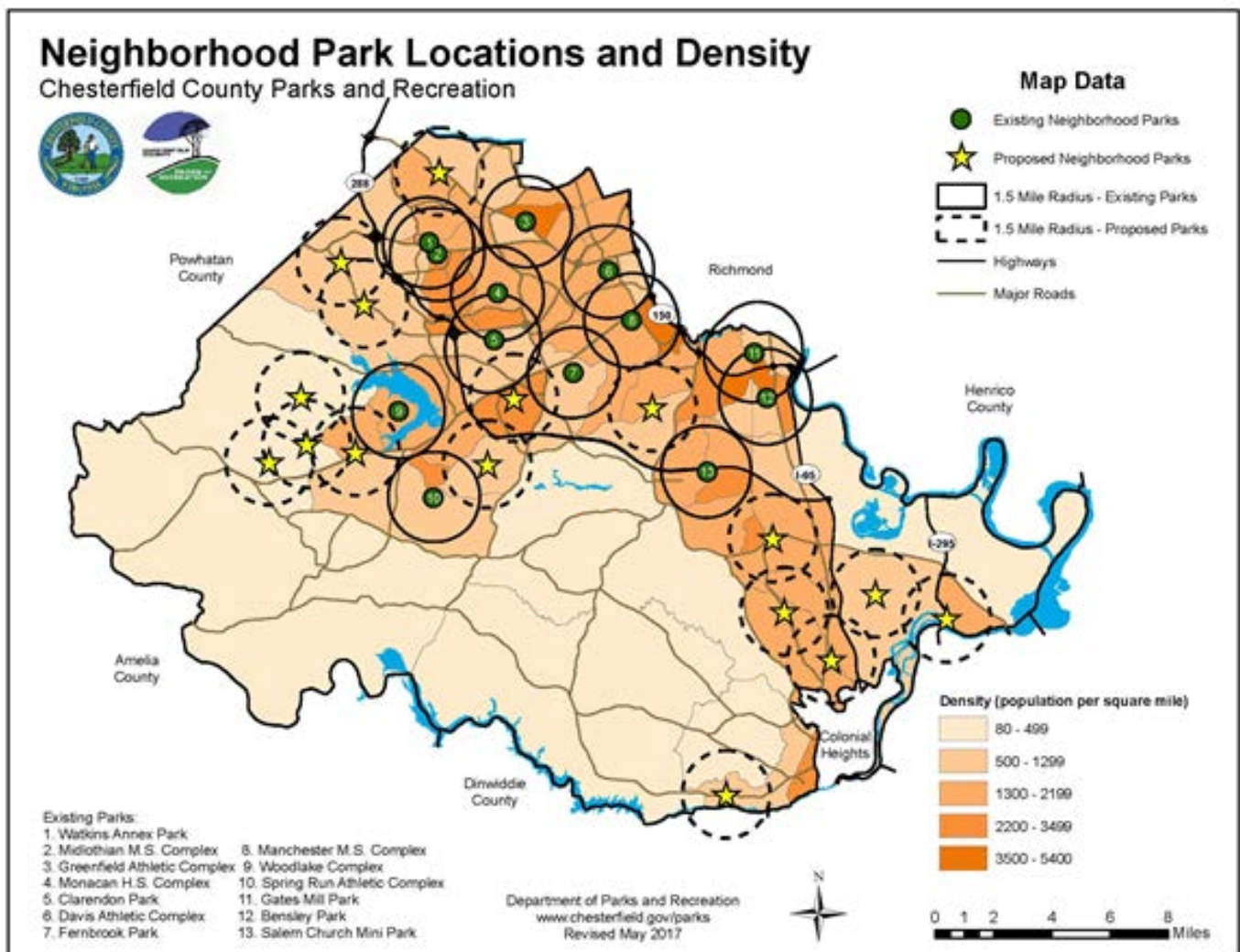


Figure X: Neighborhood Park Locations and Population Density

- The County should locate additional neighborhood park sites in Matoaca, the I-95 corridor between Route 288 and Colonial Heights, west of Swift Creek reservoir and Route 288, and other underserved areas identified in Figure X on the previous page. Additional community parks should be located north of Route 288, to the west and north of Swift Creek Reservoir, near I-295, south of Chester, and other underserved areas identified in Figure X on this page. These are areas with residential populations that are currently underserved by existing neighborhood or community parks, or are anticipated to be built out to a density that requires additional parks.
- Develop the next planned new public school as a model dual-use neighborhood park that will serve the school and citizens concurrently.

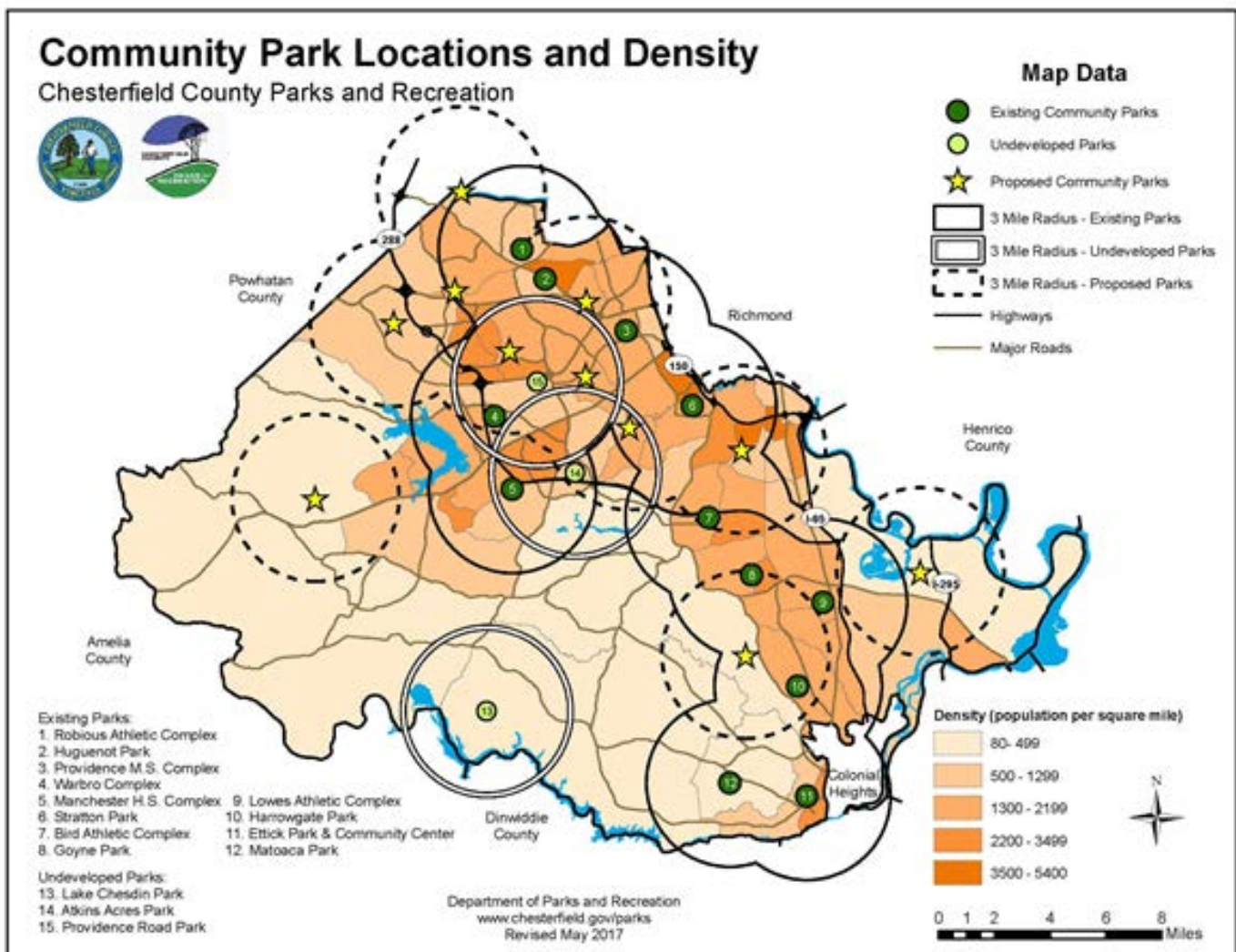


Figure X: Community Park Locations and Population Density

## Equal Access to Regional Parks

Chesterfield County has a shortfall of regional parks, needing an additional 726 acres to meet the 2017 target level of service. The Comp Plan has identified 3 additional potential regional park site that if developed would provide distributed park access to the residential areas of the County. The County should first focus on developing the proposed parks before developing the planned Irvin G. Horner Park in order to increase the areas served by regional parks. Irvin G. Horner Park is adjacent to currently developed Clover Hill Athletic Complex regional park, and so the development of Irvin G. Horner Park would not increase the areas served by regional parks.

- Pursue acquisition and development of 510 additional acres for regional. Priority should be given to the sites identified as proposed park locations in the Comprehensive Plan.
- Build out the undeveloped Irvin G. Horner Park site.

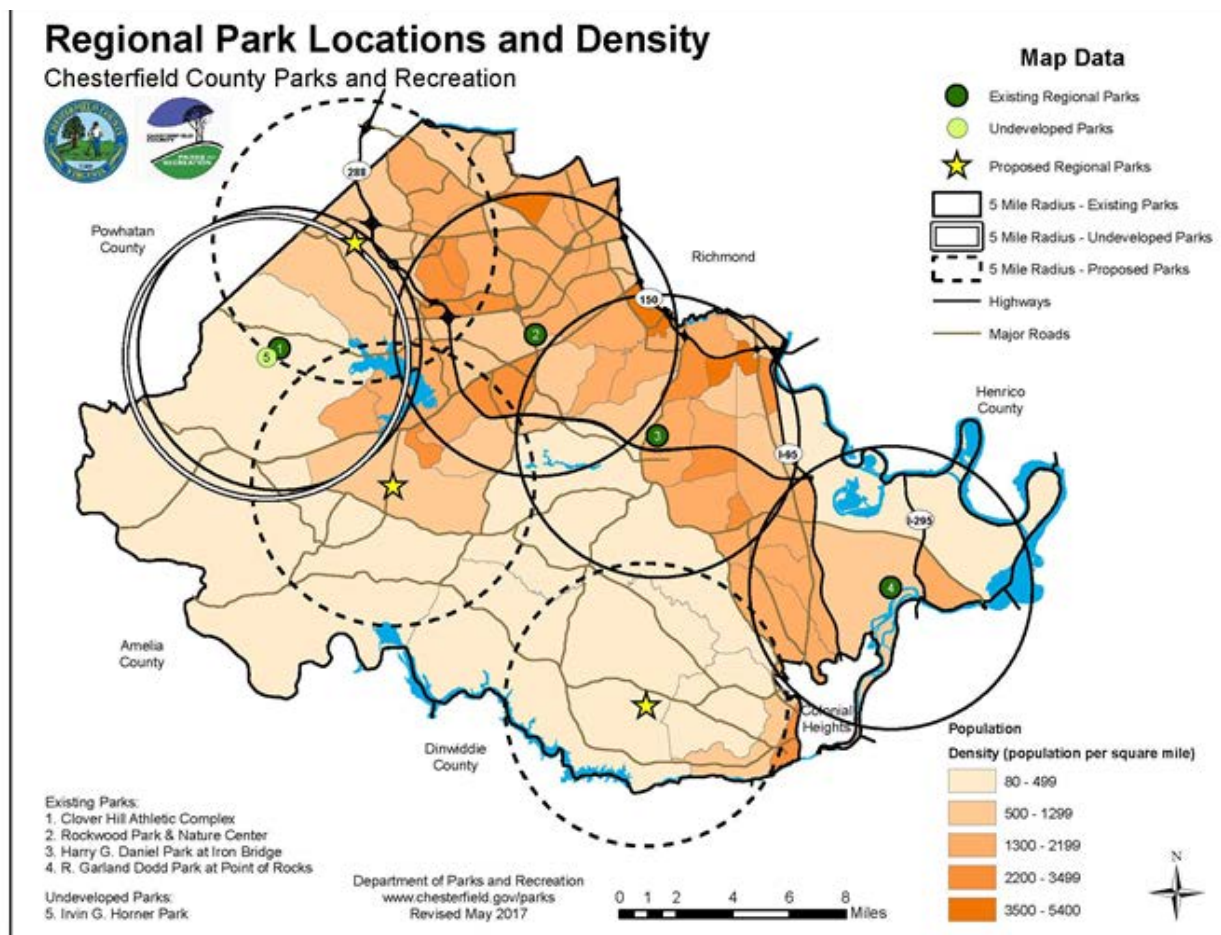


Figure X: Regional Park Locations and Population Density

## Construct Urban Style Parks

As Chesterfield continues to develop urban pockets of high density and mix-use infill, these areas require parks of a different character. Urban style parks will be 0.5-5 acres in size and serve residents, office workers, and retail areas. It is recommended that the County develop a demonstration urban park within the next five years that uses best practices, and start planning for urban parks in regions designated as mixed-use by the comprehensive and special area plans.

# Facilities

## RENOVATIONS TO EXISTING FACILITIES

### ***Identified concerns:***

- *Lack of a standard of amenities at parks*
- *Need for park maintenance and improvement*
- *Need for a conditions assessment and improvement plan for each park in the system*
- *Preservation and celebration of historic sites*

This report examines system-wide themes and inventory data to develop recommendations for renovations to the existing parks. To develop a detailed list of improvements and renovations to each park site, a separate inventory and report must be created at a later point.

### **Implement Consistent Core Amenities in All Parks**

Consistency in park development and amenities gives cohesion and identity to the park system. It creates a reliable resource that the public can depend upon to meet certain basic needs. Once these core amenities are provided, each park should be evaluated every 5-10 years to ensure that the facilities and amenities are still dynamic and are serving the needs of the citizens. Underutilized facilities should be repurposed. Stagnancy in each park, and in the park system overall, is to be avoided.

It is recommended that all parks contain the following core amenities:

- A soft surface walking (6' width or less) or multi-use (7' width or greater) path
- Hard surface accessible routes
- An open grass play area
- Accessibility to all principle facilities
- A special use or amenity that makes the park unique in the County park system

In addition to the above list, community and regional parks should also contain:

- Picnic shelters with amenities and central to core of activity areas
- Playground with age grouped apparatuses and universally accessible features
- Diamond and rectangular athletic fields
- Court games

### **Continue Maintenance Program**

Continue systematically following the major maintenance schedule that addresses needs across system facilities and geographies. Update the maintenance schedule as new facilities are materials are included in the parks system.

### **Prioritize Facilities for Improvement**

To ensure that renovations serve the greatest need, the Department should focus on facilities that are [1] not in serviceable condition and/or have safety issues; [2] highest used; [3] requiring more frequent regular maintenance to maintain in serviceable condition, and [4] addresses equity gap areas of the County.

### **Conduct an Evaluation of all Parks and Facilities**

Conduct an evaluation of all parks and facilities in the Parks and Recreation system. The evaluation should include site visits to all locations, inventory of existing amenities, notation of necessary repairs and maintenance, and a list of recommendations for improvement.

### **Invest in and Develop Historic Sites to Enhance their Features**

The quantity and diversity of historic sites is a defining feature of Chesterfield County. The recommended park and facility evaluation will identify potential improvements and enhancements to historical sites. Adequate funding should be planned for to preserve and enhance the historic amenities at each site. Improvements that are compatible with the site and will enrich the visitors experience should be sensitively fit into the site.

# NEW FACILITIES

**Identified concerns:**

- Shortfall of indoor recreation square footage
- Need for additional recreational use trails
- High public demand for additional playgrounds
- Limited public water access points
- Need for recreational aquatics
- Need for increased diversity within County amenities
- Need for inclusive accessibility of park features
- Need for additional dog parks
- Need for additional picnic shelters in high use areas
- Need for nature center for interpretation of the Coastal Plain geographic region
- Slight need for a variety of athletic fields and recreational amenities as identified in the level of service analysis and public surveys.

This report examines the Chesterfield parks system as a whole and looks for broad themes for improvement. Based on these broad themes, the report identifies preliminary recommendations. A follow up report is necessary to conduct a detailed inventory and analysis of each park site to develop a specific recommendation plan for each park.

**Construct Additional Community Centers**

Based on the Level of Service analysis and public feedback, the County needs additional community centers. The County currently operates three 5,000 sf community centers that provide warming kitchens, activity rooms, and meeting rooms. It is recommended that the County provide a geographically distributed array of 10,000-20,000 sf community centers, one in each of the five districts. The community centers should serve all generations.

The current standard 5,000 sf footprint limits the types of amenities available to citizens. Future community centers should be of sufficient size to accommodate a wider range of activities. To provide a more comprehensive array of indoor recreation amenities in the County, the department should consider expanding a centrally located community center to function as a recreation center. The addition would include indoor fitness facilities, exercise rooms, and athletic courts that are not currently publicly available. The County should also size recreation centers to serve the size of the population in the immediate vicinity.

**Plan for Additional Community Centers**

The County’s population is projected to increase, and the citizens will need additional community and recreation centers. The County should begin planning for the development of a series of dispersed community/recreation centers designed to serve an area of the County. The recreation centers should be located so that all parts of the County are equally served.

**Improve Linkages to Adjacent Neighborhoods**

Ideally, people who live near a park can walk or bike to reach the park. This increases physical activity, reduces reliance on automobiles, and creates stronger feelings of community. The Department should create a connectivity plan that identifies possible links between populated areas and nearby parks and implement those connections.

## **Address Walking/Hiking Trail Needs**

Construct new or expand existing hiking trail networks in County parks for recreation and install walking trail linkages for recreation. Hiking trails, preferably loop trails, should be installed on existing park property. Walking trails should serve as internal circulation within residential communities and connect to destinations like schools, parks, commercial and retail areas. Encourage trail development as part of sub-division planning.

Trails are to be developed in a hierarchical system:

- Paved trail: A 8'-10' wide accessible asphalt multi-use trail that links developed areas of the park and links the park with the community. This trail can be used for recreation or as part of a transportation network.
- Stone dust trail: A 8'-10' wide accessible stone dust surfaced trail to be used for recreation in the park.
- Explorer trail: A 2'-5' wide packed earth trail through natural areas.

The ratio of these trail types in the park system as a whole shall be 1:1:0.5, respectively

The mileage and type of trails at each park will depend upon topography, park purpose, existing development, and many other factor, but a guideline should be 4 miles of trails at regional parks, 2-3 miles at community parks, and ½ - 1 mile at neighborhood parks.

## **Develop and Expand Multi-Use Path Systems**

Walking and biking trails were one of the most demanded items by the citizens and is a priority in the County Comp Plan. The County should include walking and biking trails within park boundaries and connect these trails to public access points within the surrounding area. The County should also support and partner with regional efforts to develop trail systems, like the FOLAR Trail and the East Coast Greenway bike route.

## **Develop Additional Water Access Points**

Seek additional water access points along the Appomattox and James Rivers and provide small scale public boat ramps, non-powered boat launches, and fishing piers. The overcrowded Dutch Gap Landing boat launch site should be redeveloped to increase efficiency and capacity. The County is currently planning on constructing one additional powered boat launch and two additional non-powered boat launches on the James River and 2 non-powered boat launches on the Appomattox, which would double the existing capacity. Fishing is planned to be available at all the new boat launch sites.

## **Investigate the development of recreational lake swimming facilities**

Lake Chesdin is a 3,100 acre reservoir bordering the south-west of the County, and the Parks and Recreation Department operates property along the waterfront. The County can investigate the development of a recreational swimming facility and beach along the lake. This would be a cost effective and accelerated method to address some of the demand for a public swimming facility while the recreational aquatics study is being investigated and implemented.

## Address Recreational Aquatic Facility Needs

The public has expressed a demand for additional recreational aquatic facilities. The County operates no public aquatic facilities, and so citizens must depend upon Pocahontas State Park and private clubs, communities, and recreation centers to meet their aquatic needs. The majority of private facilities are located in the northwest of the County in the Midlothian region, leaving the rest of the County underserved. In order to proceed with incorporating aquatics into the County's parks and recreation system, there needs to be a feasibility study of what type of facility would best meet community needs now and in the future (e.g. sprayground, water park, indoor pool, or outdoor pool); where to best locate the facility(ies); what the business plan should be; and how to fund it.

A sprayground is a cost-effective way to alleviate some of the demand for aquatic facilities. A sprayground consists of a level surface (typically concrete with a non-slip texture) that hosts a variety of water play elements such as spray jets, overhead buckets and showers, and bubbler fountains. Spraygrounds are zero depth water features, require minimal maintenance and supervision, and can be used for alternate purposes in the off-season. To address the County's immediate need for aquatic recreation, one destination-quality sprayground (structures, interactives, multiple and diverse elements) should be constructed in a central location as a demonstration project. The County should then investigate the construction of additional smaller spraygrounds in neighborhood and community parks to meet the demand for water play, particularly in the summer months.



Typical sprayground

Spraygrounds do not address all of the needs encompassed in recreational aquatics. They are outdoor seasonal amenities, primarily for youth. They do not meet the needs for swimming education, fitness, or therapy. These needs can only be met by a pool. The County needs to consider this when conducting the recreational aquatics feasibility study.

## Develop a County Blueways Master Plan

The County should develop a master plan for water trails or "blueways". The plan should identify water trail routes, policies for improvement of water quality and navigability, additional access points, easements and properties to acquire, and methods for promotion and advertisement of the blueways.

## Construct Additional Playgrounds

There is a high demand for playgrounds. Though the youth population will peak in 2020, the current inventory is far enough below the target level of service that the County should still build additional playgrounds. They can be integrated into the new neighborhood and community parks that the County will build. The County should investigate creating themed playgrounds that provide more diversity of experiences and options throughout the County. Playgrounds should also be designed for inclusive and accessible play.

## **Increase Public Availability of School Parks**

Work with the Chesterfield County Public Schools system to develop school campuses to have clearly defined and secured “school” and “public” zones that can be used concurrently while school is in session. The Department will design a plan for each campus that is implemented when the site receives major infrastructure investment.

## **Construct Additional Picnic Shelters in High Use Areas**

There is a shortage of picnic shelters in high use areas, both in terms of adjacency to population centers and, within the park, adjacency to ancillary park amenities. To address underserved areas of the County, additional picnic shelters should be constructed in parks mainly west of Rt. 288 in the Hull Street Road and Genitio Road areas. All new shelters should be constructed near supporting amenities like restrooms, parking, and recreation areas. Existing shelters should be evaluated on a case by case basis, and should either have new supporting amenities constructed in close proximity or as the structure reaches the end of its lifespan, be relocated closer to these amenities. The County should increase the diversity of types of picnic shelters available for use and rental by constructing enclosed picnic shelters and 150-person or greater facilities.

## **Create additional pickleball playing courts**

Pickleball is a sport growing in popularity across all generations while the interest in tennis is waning. This report recommends that the County address the need for additional pickleball courts by converting a cluster of tennis courts into 6-8 pickleball courts and dual striping 3-6 additional tennis courts for both sports. The cluster of 6-8 pickleball courts should be located in a central location in the County and the dual striped courts may be dispersed at parks throughout the County.

## **Construct Additional Dog Parks**

People noted an unmet need for a fenced dog park in the online survey and at community meetings. To conveniently serve all geographical areas in the County, this report recommends that 3 more additional dog parks be added: one each in the western area, northern area, and south/east Ettrick area. These parks can be added to existing parks or incorporated into the program plan for new parks.

## **Construct a new nature center in the Coastal Plain geographical region of the County**

Chesterfield County is fortunate to encompass two distinct geographical regions, but currently only has a nature center to interpret the Piedmont region. The County should construct a second nature center in the Coastal Plain region to interpret the geology and ecology of that region. The nature center should be located within an area that contains quintessential features of the Coastal Plain, like tidal swamps, marshes, or exposed sediment bluffs. Swift Creek Conservation Area or Dutch Gap Conservation Area could be appropriate places to locate a nature center.

## **Provide the equivalency of nine new un-lighted rectangular fields**

Review of the AP system and private rentals indicates that the equivalency of nine additional un-lighted field is necessary to meet the practice and game requirements of the soccer league. This shortfall can be addressed by constructing new un-lighted fields, constructing new lighting fields, installing lights on existing fields, or a combination. One lighted field is equivalent to two un-lighted fields.

### **Construct two additional league-quality outdoor volleyball courts**

There is slight demand for additional volleyball courts. To meet this demand while also increasing the diversity of amenities within the park system, the department should construct an additional two outdoor volleyball courts to league game standards, which will double the league-quality courts available.

### **Provide additional outdoor basketball courts**

Based on the level of service analysis, five additional basketball courts are needed in the County. The County will be developing new community and neighborhood parks to meet current need, and the basketball courts can be included in the amenities offered at the new park facilities.

### **Construct an additional disc golf course**

Construct an additional disc golf course in the central or western part of the County to complement the existing disc golf course in Goyne Park, the eastern part of the County. Demand for disc golf is not high, but an additional disc golf course may attract new users to the park system and will provide easier access to the facility. The new disc golf course should provide an alternative playing experience to the open fairways of the Goyne course, perhaps designed for intermediate to advanced players and including elements like open woodlands, elevation change, and water bodies.

### **Follow through on the planned construction of an additional archery range**

Demand for archery is increasing and an additional facility will increase the geographic accessibility of archery resources. The County should continue with their plan to construct an additional range focusing on FITA style target archery up to 90 meters at Horner Park, in the western part of the County. This location complements the existing range in Rockwood Park, which serves the central area of the County. The department may wish to consider designing the range at Horner Park in an alternative design, like a 3D range, to expand the variety of amenities offered by the county.

### **Upgrade Existing Sports Facilities as Destination-Quality Sports Tournament Centers**

The County should upgrade existing sports facilities at parks to provide tournament style facilities, several of one type of sports field, rather than one each of many types. The fields should be made flexible through portable mounds and multi-field striping to be able to accommodate many types of sports.

### **Construct Stadium Facilities for Rectangular and Ball Fields**

The County is branding itself as a sports tournament destination, however currently has no stadium facility to host play-off games. The County should construct stadium facilities that will serve rectangular and ball fields at a location or locations that are in close proximity to existing sports tournament facilities.

### **Install Portable Mounds on Ball Fields**

Select ball fields should be reconstructed with portable mounds. This will allow flexibility for multiple sports to be played on the same facility, which will increase the capacity of the County without constructing new fields.

# Programs

## Perform Program Assessment

Develop a Programs Assessment and Recommendations Report that will analyze the current program offerings, partnerships, and funding and revenue strategies and make recommendations to address current and projected future needs.

# Operations

***Identified concerns:***

- *Need for increased efficiency in park upkeep*
- *Need for continued coordination between departments*
- *Address principal maintenance worker staffing levels*
- *Potential of inconsistent ADA access and inclusivity*
- *Plan for long term environmental sustainability within the Department*

## Explore new materials and methods

Maintenance cost, frequency, and labor as well as operating cost can be reduced by switching materials or procedures. The County should explore what new technologies in materials or innovations in procedures might exist and consider adopting them.

## Continue standardization of systems

Continue with the use of standardized major systems for more effective replacement and maintenance tasks, such as lighting, irrigation, HVAC, and fixtures for buildings and sites.

## Efficient procurement

Utilize time savings and cost effective methods for procurement of system components and services.

## Continue coordination with other County departments

Continue coordinated efforts with other County departments to streamline and aggregate related task and services supporting the major maintenance needs.

## Schedule replacement of critical maintenance equipment

Maintenance equipment has not been consistently replaced based on lifecycle requirements. Complete a lifecycle analysis of maintenance vehicles and equipment (trucks, tractors, zero-turn mowers, utility cars). Develop a business case to increase funding for scheduled replacement of critical maintenance equipment and non-fleet vehicles.

## Update Park Maintenance Standards

Review current standards, resources to achieve standards and align tasks to resources and/or additional resources required.

### **Invest in a software program to track maintenance operations cost**

Work with county IT Department to develop/purchase software to effectively track maintenance operation costs by facility and tasks – labor, equipment, materials, and contractual assistance.

### **Invest in a new field scheduling software program**

The current fields scheduling software is cumbersome and the County should work with the Recreation division to install a new scheduling software program.

### **Explore methods to reduce principal maintenance worker turnover rates**

Explore opportunities to enhance compensation for Principal Maintenance Worker positions to reduce turnover rates to a manageable level. Areas to consider include: update and enhance Career Development Program, re-classification of position, and compression increases.

### **Increase maintenance worker staff levels**

Develop business case to obtain funding for additional part-time and seasonal staffing to increase staff/facility ratio to 2002 levels.

### **Develop an Inclusionary and ADA Access Action Plan**

The Department should develop a parks and facilities ADA Access Action Plan for implementing inclusionary practices system-wide. This plan would identify any current shortcomings within the system, advise how to address them, and recommend additional standards for park and facility design, program management, and operational practices. Recommendations might include building playgrounds with a certain percentage of accessible play features, diversification of types of programs offered, and special-services training for departmental staff.

### **Develop a sustainability report for the department**

The Department operates almost 5,000 acres of land in the County, including environmentally valuable resources, and the operation, maintenance, and programming of these spaces and facilities has in aggregate a large environmental impact. The County should develop an environmental sustainability report that analyzes current practices and makes recommendations for long-term sustainable practices that can be implemented in every section of the Department's operation.

# Action Items

## Implementation Priorities

Priorities were determined by overlaying findings from public input and expressed demand, the Needs

Assessment, and a list of recommendations to determine the way in which action items must be addressed to sustain the Parks and Recreation system and continue to meet community demands. For example, where the public expressed concern about an issue, funding could be readily available to remedy the issue, and allowing the issue to linger would be detrimental to the community and/or function of the parks and recreation system, implementation of the related recommendation would rank as an immediate priority. Alternatively, long-term priorities involve recommendations that require in-depth consideration, compilation of larger funding amounts, and long-range planning. On-going efforts are implementation items that can be done on an as-needed basis, should be done on a periodic (seasonal, annual, or other cycle) basis, and as funding becomes available.

Priorities were divided into the following categories:

- **Short-term – Complete within the next 5 years (by 2025)**

- **Long-Term – Complete within the next 5-20 years (by 2040)**

- **On-going – Undertake as on-going effort, as issues arise, or as land or funding becomes available**

Priorities should be reviewed every year to reflect budgets, staffing levels, new policies, usage trends, and citizen demand. Certain priorities may also shift if opportunities arise to implement recommendations sooner than listed in this plan. Parks and recreation staff must rely on their experience and community feedback in order to adjust priorities each year. The entire plan should be reevaluated after five years to account for any large scale shifts in development, population, demand, or other unforeseen events.

Implementation Priority	
Type of Facility	Priority Ranking
Recreation Center	1
Trails (7' width and over)	2
Trails (6' width and under)	3
Community Park	4
Power Boat Ramp	5
Non-Powered Boat Ramp	6
Neighborhood Park	7
Park Managed Lands (R, C, N)	8
Sprayground	9
Regional Park	10
Playgrounds	11
Football Fields	12
Rectangular Fields	13
General Play Fields	14
Picnic Areas/Shelters	15
Fishing Access	16
Dog Parks	17
Environmental Education Center	18
Overall Acreage	19
Archery Range	20
Basketball Courts	21
Disc Golf Course	22
Outdoor Pickleball Courts	23
Ball Fields	24
Outdoor Volleyball	25
Handball/Racketball Courts	26
Tennis Courts	27

## Short-term (within 5 years)

### **Parkland**

- Build out undeveloped community parks (Lake Chesdin Park, Atkins Acres Park, Providence Road Park)
- Add community or neighborhood park amenities to the following special purpose parks: Cogbill Park, Falling Creek Ironworks, Falling Creek Linear Park, Henricus Historical Park, Historic Point of Rocks Park, James River Conservation Area, Kiwanis Park, River City Sportsplex, and Robious Landing Park.
- Develop a planned new school as a model dual-use neighborhood park and school campus.
- Pursue the acquisition and development of an additional regional park in a location proposed on the Comprehensive Plan.
- Construct a demonstration urban park that features best practices.

### **Existing Facilities**

- Conduct an evaluation of all parks and facilities, noting necessary repairs and maintenance and listing recommendations for improvement
- Implement consistent core amenities in all parks
- Prioritize improvements, giving precedence to facilities that are (1) not in serviceable condition and/or have safety issues; (2) highest used; (3) requiring more frequent regular maintenance to maintain in serviceable condition; and (4) addresses equity gap areas of the County.
- Implement existing historic site master plans

### **New Facilities**

- Construct two additional community centers to serve the Midlothian and Matoaca districts.
- Develop a connectivity plan for each park in the County system identifying how to link residential areas to the parks via sidewalks, trails, or bike lanes.
- Partner with and support regional trail efforts like the FOLAR Trail and the East Coast Greenway trail route.
- Develop 40 miles of new recreational trails within the parks system. To keep to the preferred ratio of paved, stone dust, and explorer trails, the County should develop an additional 38 miles of paved or stone dust trails and 2 miles of explorer trails.
- Develop a County Blueways Master Plan
- Construct a sprayground at a centralized location
- Investigate the development of a recreational lake swimming facility
- Conduct a feasibility study to address recreational aquatic needs
- Construct additional picnic shelters in high-use areas
- Convert tennis courts to pickleball courts in a central location and dual stripe courts at a dispersed series of parks
- Provide the equivalency of nine new un-lighted rectangular fields

## Short-term (within 5 years)

### Programs

- Develop a Programs Assessment and Recommendations Report that will analyze the current program offerings and make recommendations to address current and projected future needs.

### Operations

- Create a database of maintenance and lifecycle repairs for all parks and amenities within the system.
- Develop an Inclusionary and ADA Access Plan
- Develop a sustainability report and recommendations for the Parks and Recreation Department.
- Invest in a software program to track maintenance operations costs
- Invest in new field scheduling software program
- Update Park Maintenance Standards
- Complete a lifecycle analysis of maintenance equipment and develop a business case to increase funding for scheduled replacement of critical equipment.
- Update Principal Maintenance Worker Career Development Plan
- Create position-specific Career Development Strategies for other positions within the Parks Operations Division
- Identify professional development opportunities for all staff

## Long-term (5-20 years)

### Parkland

- Pursue acquisition and/or development of 256 additional acres for neighborhood parks. Priority should be given to the sites identified as proposed park locations in the Comprehensive Plan and areas identified by this plan as unserved, including Matoaca, the I-95 corridor between Route 288 and Colonial Heights, and west of Swift Creek Reservoir and Route 288.
- Pursue acquisition and/or development of 364 acres from community parks. Priority should be given to the sites identified as proposed park locations in the Comprehensive Plan and areas identified by this plan as unserved, including north of Route 288, to the west and north of Swift Creek Reservoir, near I-295, and south of Chester.
- Build out the undeveloped Irvin G. Horner Park site
- Pursue acquisition and development of two additional regional parks, as located on the Comprehensive Plan.
- Plan for urban parks in high-density areas

## Long-term (5-20 years)

### **New Facilities**

- Develop an additional 20,000 sf of public indoor recreation space in areas centrally located to high population areas.
- Develop a distributed array of 10,000-40,000 sf recreation centers around the County to serve areas forecast for development or densification.
- Work closely with other departments to support the Comprehensive Plan's goal to provide 262 miles of shared use paths, some of which may be located within parks or may have a linear park formed to support the route.
- Trails should be included in all new parks, with a guideline of 4 miles in regional parks, 2-3 miles at community parks, and ½ - 1 mile at neighborhood parks.
- Increase public availability of school parks by designing them to be used concurrently by the public and students while maintaining the security of students. Develop a set of guidelines and best practices that can be retrofit to existing schools and applied to new development.
- Construct a new nature center in the Coastal Plain region of the County
- Construct two additional league-quality outdoor volleyball courts
- Construct an additional disc golf course
- Construct an additional archery range

## On-Going

### **Parkland**

Work with developers to incorporate park space into new residential and mixed-use developments

### **Existing Facilities**

- Plan for equipment replacement
- Track amenity/material lifecycles
- Undertake periodic surveys to keep track of trends
- Incorporate sustainability into all levels of park/facility management.

### **New Facilities**

- Continue average annual construction of new trails in the County parks to 2.2 miles. Maintain the system-wide ratio of paved:stone dust:explorer trails to 1:1:0.5.

### **Operations**

- Continue with the standardization of major systems
- Utilize time savings and cost effective methods for procurement
- Continue coordination with other County departments to streamline and aggregate related tasks
- Work toward CAPRA accreditation
- Explore new materials and methods

Beyond these items, the Department should use this report and their professional knowledge as a guide to determine how to move forward with necessary and desirable improvements to the park system, particularly more costly enhancements that require long lead times.